THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC OF PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC OF PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

4

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Theology

---

by

Charles Raymond Gaba

September, 1967

APPROVAL SHEET

THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC OF PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

Charles Raymond Gaba

Read and Approved by:

Eric C. Rust (Chairman)

Wayne E. Ward

Dale Moody

Clyde T. Francisco

Date Sept 7/67

TO

BETTY JO

PREFACE

During the past several years, I have become increasingly aware of the need to defend the Christian Faith in a world in which it is being progressively questioned or ignored. The Church is being challenged on every hand by those who are no longer willing to accept its message naively to justify its existence.

In the course of my graduate seminars in Christian Philosophy, I became aware of some modern efforts to defend the Christian Faith in this mechanistic, scientific and positivistic age. Among these is the work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. A reading of The Phenomenon of Man stimulated my interest in his efforts to relate the Christian message to the contemporary, scientific world-view. After a conversation with Dr. E. C. Rust, and with some encouragement from him and Dr. Wayne E. Ward, I decided that a study of Teilhard's apologetic would be of significant value. I have not been disappointed. I was initially impressed by the depth of his Christian commitment and character. Subsequently, I have been fascinated by the breath-taking scope of the synthesis he developed.

One does not live and work alone. The help and co-operation of others is always involved in any individual accomplishment. Such has been the case in the development and completion of this thesis. I would especially like to express appreciation to Dr. E. C. Rust, who has played a major role in the development of my thought through his leadership of seminars and in private conversation. He has also offered valuable advice and direction throughout the writing process. I wish also to thank Dr. Wayne E. Ward, who has been a friend and constant source of encouragement through my association with him in seminars and as his Fellow in the Department of Theology. Dr. Dale Moody and Dr. Clyde T. Francisco have also been of much help through seminar contributions and in the reading of this manuscript.

I wish to thank Dr. George B. Barbour for making certain unpublished materials by Teilhard available and giving of his time in personal interviews. I am endebted to Mrs. Leo Crismon for her dependable work as typist. Many others have been of help either directly or indirectly. I can only express a general word of appreciation for their contribution.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following publishers for permission to reproduce copyrighted material from the works listed: Cambridge University Press, *The Realm of Ends or Pluralism and Theism*, by James Ward; Chicago Theological Seminary *Register*, "Teilhard as a Philosopher," by Ernan McMullin; William Collins Sons and Company, *Man's Place in Nature*, *The Making of a Mind: Letters from a Soldier-Priest, 1914-1919*, and *The Vision of the Past*, by Teilhard de Chardin, and *Teilhard de Chardin Album*, edited by Jeanne Mortier and Marie-Louise Aboux; *Cross Currents Quarterly*, "The Psychological Conditions of Human Unification," by Teilhard de Chardin; Fondation Teilhard de Chardin, "How I Believe," by Teilhard de Chardin; Harper and Row, *Hymn of the Universe*, *Letters from a Traveller*, *The Appearance of Man*, *The Divine Milieu*, *The Future of Man*, and *The Phenomenon of Man*, by Teilhard de Chardin, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ*, by Christopher F. Mooney, and *Matter and Spirit: Their Convergence in Eastern Religions*, Marx, and Teilhard de Chardin, by R. C. Zaehner; Hawthorn Books, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning, by Henri de Lubac; Helicon Press, Inc., Teilhard de Chardin: A Biographical Study, by Claude Cuenot; Herder and Herder, Man and Cosmos: Scientific Phenomenology in Teilhard de Chardin, by Paul Chauchard; Newman Press, The Design of Teilhard de Chardin, by Piet Smulders; Oxford University Press, Biology and the Nature of Man, by W. H. Thorpe; Philosophy Today, "Teilhard de Chardin on Evil and the Cross," by Georges Crespy; Teilhard Research Institute, Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference, 1964; The Macmillan Company, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: His Life and Spirit, by Nicolas Corte; The Seabury Press, Rethinking the Christian Message, by W. Norman Pittenger; Thought, "Blondel and Teilhard de Chardin: An Exchange of Letters," by Christopher F. Mooney.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE vi

TABLE OF CONTENTS viii

LIST OF FOOTNOTE ABBREVIATIONS xii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION: A SUMMARY OF TEILHARD'S LIFE 1

His Early Childhood 1
  His home 1
  His passion for what is durable 2
  His early education 4
His Early Professional Training and Experiences 4
  Entrance into the Society of Jesus 4
  Teaching experience in Cairo 6
  Study in Sussex 6
  Study of geology in Paris 11
His Service in World War I 11
  Service as a stretcher-bearer 11
  Influence of J. H. Newman 12
  Recognition for bravery 13
  Vow of poverty, chastity and obedience 13
  Maturation of his thought 15
  Influence of Maurice Blondel 15
  Influence of Fernand Prat 18
His Work in China 19
  Professor of geology at the Catholic Institute 19
  Relationship with Edouard Le Roy 19
  First trip to China 20
  Return to Paris 20
  Return to China 22
World War II and Teilhard's Later Years 25
  Isolation in China during World War II 25
  Publication of The Phenomenon of Man denied 28
  Return to France 28
  Censure of his philosophical writings 30
  Sickness in 1947 31
  Forbidden to become a candidate for a Professorship in the College of France 31
  Encouragement to become a secular priest 32

Chapter Page

New York period 33
Honors given Teilhard 36
An Evaluation of Teilhard's Life and Purpose 37
His view of life 37
His character and temperament 38
The man 39
His mission 41

II. A SURVEY OF TEILHARD'S APOLOGETIC 43

The Scope of Apologetics 43
Definition of apologetics 43
Task of the apologist 44
Teilhard's Apologetic Purpose 47
His purpose as viewed by others 47
His purpose as he stated it 49
Teilhard's View of the Apologetic Situation 51
Modern unbelief 51
The need for optimism 53
The need to reconcile believers and unbelievers 57
The need for a neo-humanity and a neo-Christianity . . 59
Teilhard's Approach 62
The role of intuition 62
The faith-principle: subjectivity versus objectivity 69
His dialectic 77
His hyperphysics 81
His language 87
His method: a summary 93
An Evaluation 97

III. THE WORLD AS AN EVOLUTION MOVING TOWARD SPIRIT 104

Transformism 104
A definition of evolution 104
The movement of evolution 106
The meaning of evolution 109
The new concept of time 112
The process of evolution 114
Complexity/Consciousness 118
The "within" versus the "without" of things 118
The law of complexification 123
The drive toward consciousness 125
The triumph of spirit 130
Orthogenesis 132
Definition of orthogenesis 132
Defense of orthogenesis 133
Movement of orthogenesis toward spirit 135
Evaluation 137

Chapter Page

Appearance of Life 139
  Definition of life 139
  Origin of life 140
  Process of life 143
  Cerebralization 145
  Goal of life 145
  Darwin versus Lamarck 147
Summary 149

IV. SPIRIT AS ACHIEVING ITSELF IN THE PERSONAL 151

The Appearance of Man 151
  Hominization 151
  Man as the key to understanding the universe 156
  Evolution after man's appearance 159
  Man and convergence 162
  Success of hominization 166
  Faith in man 170
The Emergence of Thought 175
  The birth of thought 175
  The development of the noosphere 177
  The tools of man which extend thought 182
  The consummation of thought 183
The Cosmic Sense 186
  The significance of research 186
  The view of progress 189
  The building of the future 191
Love: the Totalizing Principle of Human Energy 194
The Convergence of Man 198
  Socialization 198
  Personalization 204
  Hyper-personal 208
  Immortality 211
  Omega 214
Summary 220

V. THE PERSONAL SUPREME AS THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST 222

The Christ 225
  Incarnation and revelation 225
  Christogenesis and the cosmic Christ 228
  Christ and evil 235
  Cross and resurrection 241
  Redemption and grace 244
  Christ as Alpha and Omega 248
The Spirit and the Father 249
The Doctrine of Man 253
  Faith and election 253
  Soul 256
  Divinization of activity and passivity 258

Chapter Page

The Doctrine of the Church 262
  The phylum of love 262
  The Body of Christ 265
The Doctrine of Last Things 270
  The Parousia 270
  Human destiny 275
Summary 277

VI. CONCLUSION: AN EVALUATION OF TEILHARD'S THOUGHT 280

Teilhard as a Philosopher 280
  Philosophy of history 280
  Pantheism 282
  Existentialism 284
  Evaluation of Teilhard as a philosopher 284
Teilhard as a Scientist 286
  Matter and spirit: the within of things 286
  Complexity/consciousness 287
  Evolution 287
  Man 288
  Omega 290
  Evaluation of Teilhard as a scientist 290
Teilhard as a Theologian 292
  Faith 292
  Christology 292
  God 293
  Evil 293
  Eschatology 294
  Evaluation of Teilhard as a theologian 295
Teilhard as an Apologist 296
  Weaknesses 297
  Strengths 298

BIBLIOGRAPHY 303

LIST OF FOOTNOTE ABBREVIATIONS

AE	*L'Activation de l'énergie*
AM	*The Appearance of Man*
Cahier I	*Building the Earth*
Cahier II	*Réflexions sur le bonheur*
Cahier IV	*La Parole attendue*
DM	*The Divine Milieu*
EH	*L'Énergie humaine*
ET	*Écrits du temps de la guerre*
FM	*The Future of Man*
HB	*How I Believe*
HU	*Hymn of the Universe*
LT	*Letters from a Traveller*
MM	*The Making of a Mind*
MPN	*Man's Place in Nature*
PM	*The Phenomenon of Man*
SC	*Science et Christ*
VP	*The Vision of the Past*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: A SUMMARY OF TEILHARD'S LIFE

Marie-Joseph-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was born at Sarcenat in the Puys District of Auvergne in Central France on May 1, 1881. His family can be traced back to Astorg Teillard, 1478-1549, who was ennobled in 1538.[1] Chardin was added to the family name through Pierre-Cirice Teilhard, who married Victore Barron de Chardin in 1841.[2]

I. HIS EARLY CHILDHOOD

His home. Teilhard was reared in an unusual home. His mother, who bore eleven children, was a woman of great piety. During her lifetime seven of the children died. Upon the death of one of them she said to the parish priest, "There is no pain. . . . Heaven lies ahead of us."[3] At the time of her death, Teilhard said, "To this dear and sainted mother . . . I owe the best part of my soul."[4]

Teilhard's father, Alexandre-Victor-Emmanuel, was a cultured "gentleman farmer." He was a humanist and an avid reader, who was quite interested in history. He directed the reading of his children and supervised their Latin lessons until they entered secondary school.

---

[1] Claude Cuenot, Teilhard de Chardin, trans. Vincent Colimore (London: Burns and Oates, 1965), p. 1.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

He instilled in his children an interest in nature, encouraging them to make collections of insects, birds, and stones.[5] Teilhard once attributed to his father "a certain balance, on which all the rest is built, along with a taste for the exact sciences."[6]

The family employed a governess to care for the children, who led a routine, well-regulated life. Most of the year was spent at the family home at Sarcenat; but the severe winter months were spent at Clarmont in the thirteenth-century house shared with some cousins.

His passion for what is durable. As a child, Teilhard was interested in mineralogy, biological observation and astronomy. His earliest memory was of an experience which colored his entire life. Recalling this incident in later life, he said:

> A memory? My very first! I was five or six. My mother had snipped a few of my curls. I picked one up and held it close to the fire. The hair was burnt up in a fraction of a second. A terrible grief assailed me; I had learnt that I was perishable. . . . What used to grieve me when I was a child? This insecurity of things. And what used I to love? My genie of iron! With a plowhitch I believed myself, at seven years, rich with a treasure incorruptible, everlasting. And then it turned out that what I possessed was just a bit of iron that rusted. At this discovery I threw myself on the lawn and shed the bitterest tears of my existence.[7]

When he was sixty-nine years old he remembered the idols of his childhood--the plowhitch, the hexagonal head of a metal staple, and some small shell-splinters collected on a shooting range.[8] He recalled such experiences with a smile; but at the same time he recognized in this attraction which made him worship a small piece of metal "there was a strong sense of self-giving and a whole train of obligations all mixed up together; and my whole spiritual life has merely been the development of this."[9]

---

[5] _Ibid._, p. 2. [6] _Ibid._, p. 3. [7] _Ibid._, citing Teilhard.

[8] Nicolas Corte, _Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: His Life and Spirit_, trans. Martin Jarrett-Kerr (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 4, citing Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Matter," unpublished essay dated 1950.

An attraction for the absolute was deeply enmeshed in the framework of his personality. At various times he called this a "cosmic sense," a "sense of plenitude," a "human sense," and a "sense of fulfilment." This attraction, or "cosmic Sense," formed one axis of his life. The other axis, which developed alongside the first, was the "Christic sense." The problem of reconciling these two axes became the central problem of Teilhard's life and the motivation for much of his writing. In 1917, he wrote of the character of his devotion to the Person of Christ:

> The movement which drew me into its current based itself upon a point, upon a person, --my own. . . . Along with everything which surrounded me, I experienced a sense of being captured by a superior Movement which stirred up the elements of the Universe, and grouped them into a new order. Now, when it was given me to see where this dazzling trail was leading . . . , I discovered that everything returned to center itself on a single point, on a Person, --Yours... Jesus!
>
> . . . Since you said, Lord: 'This is my body...', not only the Bread of the altar, but (in a certain measure) everything in the Universe which nourishes the soul in the direction of the life of the Spirit and Grace, has become yours and divine. . . .[10]

In 1926, Teilhard still felt this attraction for the absolute; however, he had begun to see things in a new light. He was no longer so intoxicated by things. He said, "The veneer of colour and scene bores me to tears; what I love is hidden."[11]

---

[9] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[10] Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Milieu Mystique," Écrits du temps de la guerre (Paris: Grasset, 1965), pp. 164-165; hereafter abbreviated ET.

His early education. In April, 1892, Teilhard was enrolled in the Jesuit secondary school at Notre-Dame de Mongré, Villefranche-sur-Saône. This was the beginning of his formal education. While here, he did well in most of his subjects; however, he did not excel in religious subjects. This was due primarily, to a non-conformist attitude toward narrow catechetical instruction.[12]

A physics teacher, Fr. Describes, with whom Teilhard studied during his fifth year, was a particular favorite who may have instilled within him a greater motivation toward scientific study.[13] Another teacher of significance was Henri Bremond, who was to become the author of the Historie littéraire du sentiment religieux en France.

Teilhard participated consistently in the religious activities available to the students, and his devotion to Mary became more deeply embedded.[14]

II. HIS EARLY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Entrance into the Society of Jesus. In 1896 and 1897 Teilhard passed his baccalaureate examinations. He then entered the Jesuit novitiate at Aix-en-Provence. He made this commitment in 1899 because of his "desire for the most perfect."[15]

---

[11] Teilhard de Chardin, Letters from a Traveller (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 123; hereafter abbreviated LT.

[12] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 4. [13] Ibid.

[14] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 21.

He was at Aix until September, 1900, when he completed his novitiate. He began his juniorate in October at Laval. There, he took his first vows on March 25, 1901.[16] During his studies at Aix, he met two fellow students, Pierre Charles and Auguste Valensin, who became close friends and exerted considerable influence upon him. These two men opened Teilhard's eyes to theology.[17] In 1954, one year before his death, Teilhard said of Pierre Charles, he "taught me to see the truth."[18] He said of Valensin, who was deeply influenced by the French philosopher, Maurice Blondel, "It was he who taught me to think."[19]

In 1902 Combes became the premier of France, and a spirit of anticlericalism prevailed. The Jesuits were outlawed; and Teilhard, his fellow students, and his teachers were forced to flee in civilian dress to the Island of Jersey.[20] Valensin continued there with Teilhard as a close friend.

At Jersey Teilhard resumed his studies. The emphasis during this period was on scholastic philosophy, and here he attained a familiarity with its methods and terminology.[21]

Teilhard became interested in the geology of the island and spent his spare time making scientific excursions. It was while at Jersey that he began his "time of preliminary investigations of the earth,"[22] which extends from 1901 to 1912.

---

[15] Cuenot, _op_. _cit_., p. 5, citing Teilhard. [16] _Ibid_.

[17] _Ibid_. [18] Teilhard de Chardin, _LT_, p. 350. [19] _Ibid_., p. 348.

[20] Michael H. Murray, _The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin_ (New York: Seabury Press, 1966), p. 3.

[21] Pierre Leroy, "The Man," in Teilhard de Chardin, _LT_, p. 22.

Teaching experience in Cairo. In September, 1905, Teilhard was appointed teacher of physics and chemistry at the Holy Family College in Cairo. He was also in charge of the museum, a disorderly collection gathered by the fathers of the school. He was not very effective here as a teacher because he taught above the heads of the students. It was apparent from the first that he was best suited for more advanced teaching. Teaching was one of his first loves, and he once confided to his parents, "I confess that I prefer giving a class to preaching a sermon. . . ."[23]

Study in Sussex. At twenty-seven, Teilhard left Cairo and went to England; and there, as is customary, he took four years of theology at Ore Place, a Jesuit house in Hastings on the Sussex coast.[24] The training was inadequate. It was unfortunate that he received his theological training during a rather sterile period when the late scholastic system of Suarez formed the basis for Jesuit theology, before the Neo-Thomist and biblical revival.[25] Pierre Smulders says of this system: "In the Suaresian system under which Teilhard was educated and against which he reacted, no internal link exists between human action and the divine gift of grace; the only link is an arbitrary decree of God."[26] During this period, Catholic theologians were quite concerned that the Church not be contaminated by critical modernist influences; consequently, its teaching was more devotional than historical or exegetical.

---

[22] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 7.

[23] Teilhard de Chardin, Letters from Egypt, trans. Mary Ilford (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 244.

[24] Cuenot, op. cit., pp. 11-12. [25] Murray, op. cit., p. 3.

[26] Pierre Smulders, La Vision de Teilhard de Chardin, trans. Augustin Kerkvoorde and Christian d'Armagnac (second edition; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965), p. 126.

He was allowed to make frequent scientific excursions to search for specimens. His competence in geology and paleontology was now clearly advancing beyond the amateur level. He also engaged in a continuing study of English, in which his ability to express himself improved steadily during the rest of his life.

He was apparently unaware of the subject of evolution until he was nearly thirty.[27] It was during this period in England that he became familiar with the controversies which centered around its various interpretations, particularly those of Darwin, Lamark, Huxley and Spencer. However, it was not until he had studied Henri Bergson's L'Evolution créatrice and returned to France that this concept began to assume its ultimate importance in his thought.[28] Teilhard later wrote of Bergson's influence:

> I remember clearly having read Creative Evolution with avidity at this time. But although I didn't very well understand at this period what exactly Bergson's Durée meant--and in any case it was not sufficiently convergent to satisfy me--I can see clearly that the effect of these passionate pages on me was merely, at the right moment and in a flash, to stir up a fire that was already burning in my heart and mind.[29]

---

[27] Charles E. Raven, Teilhard de Chardin: Scientist and Seer (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 33.

[28] Murray, op. cit., p. 4.

[29] Corte, op. cit., p. 10, citing Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Matter," (unpublished essay, Paris, October 30, 1950); see also Paul Grenet, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Theories, trans. R. A. Rudorff (London: Souvenir Press, 1965), pp. 58-59, citing the same passage and adding his own comments.

It is interesting at this point to compare and contrast the basic positions of Teilhard and Bergson. First, it may be noted that Teilhard was one of the great mystics of our time. Bergson also had an appreciation for mystical experience and devoted considerable space to the subject. He said dynamic religion, as opposed to static religion, has its source in mysticism.[30] In fact, only the great Christian mystics represent a "complete mysticism."[31] He defined the great mystic as "an individual being, capable of transcending the limitations imposed on the species by its material nature, thus continuing and extending the divine action."[32]

Second, in Bergson's view there is a vital principle, an *élan vital*, "which is life itself as it has endured through the ages."[33] Evolution "is the history of the effort of life to free itself from the domination of matter and to achieve self-consciousness."[34] Inert matter is tired, or exhausted, life. It appears "only as a tension which is interrupted."[35] The *élan* produces a cosmic tension and its disappearance produces matter. Thus, life and matter have their source in processes which are inversely proportional to one another; and each has an inverse effect upon the other. In explaining this process,

---

[30] Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (New York: Henry Holt, 1935), pp. 198-264.

[31] *Ibid*., p. 216. [32] *Ibid*., p. 209.

[33] Frank N. Magill (ed.), *Masterpieces of World Philosophy in Summary Form* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 769.

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Henry Holt, 1911), p. 254.

Bergson resorts to a vivid metaphor. It is described in terms of a container filled with steam. Through an opening a jet of steam escapes into the air above. As the steam moves upward it loses its heat energy and condenses into droplets of water, which fall back into the jet. This, in turn, creates a cooling medium, which the jet penetrates, trying to carry it upward with the thrust.[36] Thus, matter opposes life; and life is immaterial. This view of matter is opposed to that of Teilhard in that he posited a "within" and a "without" in all things, even seemingly inert matter. Inert matter does not exist in Teilhard's thought.

Third, both men appreciated the role of intuition. For Bergson reality is basically the flow of life; and it is grasped, not by reason, but by intuition.[37] Teilhard's own vision of reality was based on an intuition.[38]

Fourth, Bergson's view of the two opposing forces of life and matter is somewhat similar to Teilhard's view of the two currents of evolution--that toward entropy and that toward increasing complexity and consciousness. Bergson is vague in defining what he means by matter. In some passages he tends to suggest that it is an illusion created by the intellect. This tendency is opposed to Teilhard's acceptance of the reality of the material world.

---

[36] Ibid., p. 247.

[37] Eric C. Rust, Towards a Theological Understanding of History (New York: Oxford, 1963), p. 211.

[38] Teilhard de Chardin, The Making of a Mind: Letters from a Soldier-Priest 1914-1919, trans. René Hague (London: Collins, 1965), p. 106; hereafter abbreviated MM. See also Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, trans. Norman Denny (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 225; hereafter abbreviated FM.

Fifth, for Bergson time, or durée, is "the continuous flow of conscious experience, in which the past persists into and 'interpenetrates' the present and the future. . . ."[39] In this flow of conscious time nothing is ever exactly repeated, "for if something recurs similar to what had occurred before, it is changed by the fact that it has a different past."[40] Therefore, the evolutionary process is irreversible. Teilhard was also convinced of the irreversibility of the process.

Sixth, Bergson rejects any view that the evolutionary process is being attracted or directed toward a future goal. He rejects all determinism and sees any view of a consummation as ultimately deterministic. In particular, he rejects Leibniz's doctrine of "pre-established harmony."[41] This is in contrast to Teilhard's view of a process involving an increase in complexity and consciousness and moving toward an Omega Point. This is perhaps the greatest point of contrast between the two men, Bergson seeing life as a ramifying process, and Teilhard as a converging one.[42]

Though the above comparison of Bergson and Teilhard is of interest, it seems reasonable to accept Teilhard's statement that the reading of Bergson's philosophy only fanned a fire that was already burning. In spite of many similarities, his thought developed independently of Bergson.

---

[39] Errol E. Harris, Nature, Mind and Modern Science (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 393.

[40] Ibid., p. 394.

[41] Bergson, op. cit., pp. 39 ff.

[42] Raven, op. cit., p. 39. See also Cuenot, op. cit., p. 35.

Study of geology in Paris. On August 24, 1911, Teilhard was ordained to the priesthood.[43] Then, from Sussex and the study of theology he proceeded to Paris, where he began his work under Marcellin Boule in 1912. Boule was professor of paleontology at the Museum of Natural History in Paris and one of the leading specialists on Neanderthal man. Charles Raven has said of Teilhard's indebtedness to Boule, "It was to Boule that he owed his scientific stature, his mastery of method, his power of exact definition and his sound judgment."[44] Through the years of preparation under Boule, 1912-1914, Teilhard grew to respect and love him. It was during the period from 1912 to 1923, during his study with Boule and his service in World War I, that his thought underwent the fundamental change from a belief in fixed species to evolutionism.[45]

His friendship with Boule ultimately led to a very close friendship with Abbé Henri Breuil, a distinguished scholar in the field of pre-historical studies. With Breuil he often discussed scientific and religious problems relating to the origin of man and sin.[46]

III. HIS SERVICE IN WORLD WAR I

Service as a stretcher-bearer. In December, 1914, Teilhard was classified "fit for duty" in the French army. He was immediately called into service in the medical corps and was sent to the front, in keeping with his own wishes. On January 22, 1915, at age thirty-four, he appeared at the front, prepared to serve as a stretcher-bearer in a

---

[43] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 11.

[44] Raven, op. cit., p. 51.

[45] Cuenot, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

[46] Ibid., p. 18.

Moroccan regiment of light infantry and Zouaves.[47] About four months later he was promoted to corporal. He was later offered the rank of captain, as chaplain of the 38th Division; however, he declined the promotion, suggesting that he was of more use in the ranks among the men.[48]

Influence of J. H. Newman. During the war years he read some of J. H. Newman's writings and was quite impressed by the life and experiences of this man. He believed his own experiences were somewhat parallel to those of the Cardinal. In a letter to his cousin, Marguerite Teillard, in 1916, he said, "I feel more than ever in sympathy with the great Cardinal, so undaunted, so firm of faith, so full, as he says himself, 'of life and thought',--and at the same time, so thwarted."[49] He indicated Newman's influence upon him:

> That it is more important to fight against fundamental errors of thought than to make a few conversions or confine oneself to sectarian disputes; that the intellectual function of the Church consists primarily in eliminating, in choosing, in selecting from within, the positive dogmatic development expressed primarily in the body of the faithful.--Those who try to win the day for truth, before its time, run the risk of ending as heretics. . . . these and other similar ideas, so far reaching, so open, and hence realistic, have entered into my mind as into a dwelling long familiar to them. And what has made it all the more heartening to me to find this community of inclination and appreciation, is that the man who felt them so deeply had bitterly experienced, without being scandalized, the bitter temptation of being born before the due hour or season for his thought.[50]

Thus, during these war years Teilhard read Newman's work and felt a kinship with him.

---

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 22. [48] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[49] Teilhard de Chardin, *MM*, p. 114. [50] *Ibid.*

Recognition for bravery. Teilhard soon became known for his reliability in a dangerous situation. This was perhaps due to his conviction that death is only a change of state.[51] He was given recognition three times in Army and Divisional Orders for his bravery. He was also awarded the *Croix de Guerre* and the *Médaille Militaire*. In June, 1920, through a proposal by his former regiment and approval by all grades of command, he was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.[52]

Vow of poverty, chastity and obedience. He took his final vows of poverty, obedience and chastity as a Jesuit on May 26, 1918, at Sainte-Foy-les-Lyon.[53] In making these vows, he emphasized to his superiors his full awareness of the spiritual value and potentialities of money, human love and free research. He sought to reclaim these values through poverty, obedience and chastity. At this time he expressed his reasons for becoming a priest, in an essay entitled "Le Prêtre." He said:

> Lord, to see drawn from so much wealth, lying unused or put to base uses, all the dynamism that is locked up within it: this is my dream. And to share in bringing this about: this is the work to which I would dedicate myself.
>
> As far as I can, *because I am a priest*, I would henceforth be the first to become aware of what the world loves, pursues, suffers. I would be the first to seek, to sympathize, to toil; the first in self-fulfilment, the first in self-denial. For the sake of the world I would be more widely human in my sympathies and more nobly terrestrial in my ambitions than any of the world's servants.
>
> On the other hand I want to plunge into the midst of created things and, mingling with them, seize hold upon and disengage from them all that they contain of life eternal, down to the very last fragment, so that nothing may be lost; and on the other hand I

---

[51] Cuenot, *op. cit.*, p. 24. [52] *Ibid.*, p. 25. [53] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

> want, by practising the counsels of perfection, to salvage through their self-denials all the heavenly fire imprisoned within the three-fold concupiscence of the flesh, of avarice, of pride: in other words to hallow, through chastity, povery and obedience, the power enclosed in love, in gold, in independence.
>
> That is why I have clothed my vows and my priesthood (and it is this that gives me my strength and my happiness) in a determination to accept and to divinize the powers of the earth.[54]

In this passage the apologetic method and spiritual dialectic which mark later Teilhardian thought can be seen in embryo. In 1936 he reaffirmed his basic goal as a priest as he said, "I do indeed believe that I have never before seen my vocation so clearly and stripped of non-essentials--to personalise the world in God."[55]

He believed all ways of living could be sanctified; therefore, in choosing a vocation, each individual should seek God's leadership through the natural development of his tastes and the pressure of circumstances.[56]

He never suggested any doubt or dissatisfaction with his vocation as a priest; however, on at least one occasion he did express some reservation about his work as a paleontologist. He wondered whether it was too late in life to begin a new line of investigation which would be richer in problems and hopes than the history of life on earth.[57] Later, he indicated that his interest in the past continued only insofar as it gave him some insight into the future of life.

---

[54] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Hymn of the Universe, trans. Simon Bartholomew (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 128-129; hereafter abbreviated HU. See also Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Prêtre," ET, pp. 300-301.

[55] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 222.

[56] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 58.

[57] Ibid., p. 124.

Maturation of his thought. By 1919 the major goals of Teilhard's life were fixed. It was during the war years that the real substance of his thought began to emerge vigorously and forcefully. This was also a period of religious development. In a letter to a cousin in 1918 he says the effect of the war on his own personal life will have been to give him a faith. He said:

> Until now, zeal has always been for me something artificial, applied from outside one, something forced. Now I can understand a little what sort of passion it was that inspired the apostles. But it's most remarkable that this feeling began to arise in me only when religion became illuminated [was given life] for me, by a 'personal' way of looking at things, a 'personal' taste. No doubt there's some general psychological law at work there,--even though in many cases it may be difficult to verify it.--In one sense, mightn't you say that everyone has to have his religion, grafted on a particular natural passion??--all these particular religions converging on the same Jesus Christ. . . .[58]

Influence of Maurice Blondel. Alfred Loisy's book, L'Evangile et l'Eglise, had called for a fundamental re-interpretation of the traditional Catholic faith. The impact of biblical criticism was the source of this demand. Maurice Blondel, the French philosopher, became quite involved in the Modernist controversy and was probably the most able and effective defender of the basic Christian theology.[59] Blondel had deeply influenced Auguste Valensin, one of Teilhard's closest friends. Teilhard had great admiration for Blondel, whose theology, strangely enough, was suspect by many in the church for its "modernism,"[60] and was influenced by him.[61] He indicated the influence of Blondel on his thought in a letter, dated February 15, 1955:

---

[58] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, pp. 245-246.

[59] Raven, op. cit., p. 41. [60] Murray, op. cit., p. 6.

[61] Henri de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning, trans. René Hague (New York: Hawthorn, 1965), p. 133.

> Certain features of his thought had certainly had their effect on me: the value of action (which became for me a quasi-experimental energetics of the biological forces of evolution), and the notion of pan-Christhood (at which I had arrived independently, without daring at the time, to name it so appropriately).[62]

Throughout his life Teilhard was concerned with the meaning of human effort, or action; and he sought to prove that human action and Christian detachment are not mutually exclusive. He points out that God alone can give real existence to what our actions produce.[63] Blondel had given much thought to the role of action in human life, and had become established as one of the most profound Catholic thinkers of his time.[64] To Blondel, life is dynamic, and action becomes the very essence of existence. Man is involved in a continuous state of movement, whether he is working or at rest. Quite often even those who stand and wait are serving. Life may be separated into its outward and inward aspects, into its activities and passivities. Human action strengthens and extends human existence. It also causes the world to be more human and is the source of the world's further evolution. Through human action we are involved in the process of divine immanence. We "draw the elements of our environment into our action."[65] Therefore, when the individual becomes involved in human action, he promotes the integration and divinization of the whole. "Each of us consciously and by our choices and intitiative in individual separation yet within the body of Christ builds up the pleroma that is to be."[66]

---

[62] Cuenot, _op_. _cit_., p. 39, citing Teilhard.

[63] Teilhard de Chardin, _MM_, p. 210.

[64] Christopher F. Mooney, "Blondel and Teilhard de Chardin: An Exchange of Letters," _Thought_, XXXVII (Winter, 1962), 545.

[65] Raven, _op_. _cit_., p. 44.

In a letter to Blondel in which he attempted to clarify his position regarding human effort, Teilhard said that the purely human activity in which the majority of people are involved has a spiritualizing power. This power comes through a certain moral training which accompanies human effort and also through

> the positive results of the work itself. . . . There is in the life of every man and in the history of the human race as a whole, an enormous capacity for positive achievement and this must not be allowed to stagnate. It is absolutely necessary that Christ be as large as my life, my whole life. I must have an awareness of growing in Him, not only by ascenticism and the painful wrench of suffering . . . but also by whatever positive effort I am capable of, whatever is naturally perfective in my human achievement. I must have this awareness, I say, otherwise Christianity would be robbing me of the courage of act.[67]

He suggests that there is a type of renunciation which follows a law of transformation, rather than rupture with the world. Detachment from the world and a passion to develop it are not necessarily incompatible, if we accept "that the supernatural Plenitude of Christ receives support from the natural plenitude of the world, and that the supernatural is continually being formed by a new creation of the natural."[68] Teilhard sees, therefore, a three-fold task for the Christian: (1) to co-operate with human effort, because by so doing Christians are building toward the fullness of Christ and preparing matter to be transformed into His Plenitude;[69] (2) to accept any hardship accompanying this work and the pursuit of this ideal "as the first form of renunciation, the first victory over an egoism at once slothful and constricting";[70] and (3) to accept and cherish the fulfillments in life and also those things which diminish it, that is, "all the passive purifications which Christ has planned for us in order to transform into Himself those elements of our personality which we seek to develop for Him."[71]

---

[66] Ibid., p. 45. [67] Mooney, op. cit., p. 548, citing Teilhard.

[68] Ibid. [69] Ibid.

He was also concerned with the relation between Christ and the world, as was Blondel. He indicated in a letter of December 12, 1919, that one of the main points on which he agreed with Blondel was that "Christ must be loved as a World, or rather as _the_ World, as the physical center, fixed with finality and absolute stability, and imposed on everything in Creation destined to survive."[72]

Raven has suggested that Blondel's reference of all problems to the central fact of an indwelling and cosmic Christ possibly had a large part in Teilhard's speedy development of a "Pauline and consummating _christique_."[73] He also suggests that his knowledge of Blondel's experience deterred him from association with the Modernist movement. "For Teilhard the Modernist crisis took place while he was at school; and later though he desired to see dogma sifted and modernised he did not want it 'to evaporate into symbolism'."[74]

Influence of Fernand Prat. Fernand Prat, author of a two-volume work entitled _The Theology of St. Paul_, exerted a deep influence on Teilhard's thought.[75] It seems probable that Teilhard's deep understanding of Paul, which was probably influenced to some degree by Blondel's Pan-Christism, was primarily the result of his knowledge of Prat's two volumes.[76] In commenting on Ephesians 1:9-10 and Colossians 1:17, Prat suggests that, for Paul,

---

[70] _Ibid_., p. 549, citing a letter from Teilhard to Blondel.

[71] Ibid., citing Teilhard.

[72] _Ibid_., citing Teilhard.

[73] Raven, _op. cit_., p. 42.

[74] _Ibid_.

> without Christ all creatures would be scattered, would be fragmented, and, in mutual conflict, would sink back again into nothingness. It is Christ who preserves for them, with existence, cohesion and harmony. . . . He is the all-mastering centre of creation. . . . Even, then, in so far as he is man, Jesus Christ has a cosmic role.[77]

Teilhard's thought is in complete agreement with this statement.

IV. HIS WORK IN CHINA

Professor of geology at the Catholic Institute. Teilhard taught at the Catholic Institute in Paris from 1920 to 1923.[78] He received his doctorate from the Sorbonne on March 22, 1922, having written and successfully defended his doctoral thesis on "the mammals of the Lower Eocene period in France and the deposits of these uncovered in the trenches at Rheims."[79]

Relationship with Édouard Le Roy. Between 1920 and 1930 Teilhard developed a close relationship with Édouard Le Roy, a Bergsonian philosopher and scientist whose works were put on the Index in 1931.[80] He and Le Roy built such an intimate intellectual relationship that Le Roy wrote concerning his own L'existence idealiste et le fait d'evolution that he had discussed the views presented over such a long period and in such detail with Teilhard that neither could pick out his own contribution.[81]

---

[75] George B. Barbour, In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 129.

[76] Raven, op. cit., p. 46.

[77] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 34, citing Fernand Prat, The Theology of St. Paul.

[78] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 32. [79] Ibid., p. 30.

[80] Murray, op. cit., p. 6.

First trip to China. In 1923 Teilhard received an invitation from Father Emile Licent to assist him in excavations in central China. The invitation was accepted and Teilhard left the Institute with a subsidy from the Paris Museum for the trip. It was during this first period in China that he wrote "The Mass on the World," while on a field trip to Mongolia. In this work he offered to the Creator all human effort and all human suffering under the species of bread and wine, respectively.[82] Cuenot says it was here that he saw that "one single activity was in the course of taking place in the world, and that it alone legitimized our individual activity: the deployment of some spiritual reality through the medium of the struggle of our lives."[83]

Return to Paris. He returned to Paris in October, 1924. From then until April, 1926, he taught at the College de France; he was involved in a study of the mammals of the Tertiary and Quaternary periods; he made various geological excursions; he visited England; and his interest was being focused in the direction of the general philosophical problems evoked in his field of study.[84] He continued his evolutionary speculations, lecturing some on the subject. It was about 1925 that he coined the term, "noosphere." This term was first used in his essay, "L'hominisation," which is dated May 6, 1925.[85]

---

[81] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 58. [82] Corte, op. cit., p. 36.

[83] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 50. [84] Ibid., p. 57.

Near the end of 1926 Teilhard's religious superiors were urging him to leave the Catholic Institute. This move was the result of his presentation of his personal views on the doctrine of original sin to some young seminarians. He had attempted to reconcile the traditional view of the Church with his concept of evolution, and this had been considered improper. They finally decided that Teilhard must confine himself to strictly scientific publications and that it was necessary for him to leave Paris.[86]

Pierre Smulders says there were several factors which precipitated this action. While he was away on a trip to Belgium and England, some of his notes on original sin and monogenism were displayed without his consent; and this aroused a denunciation of his thought. When he returned from his trip a storm was brewing. Upon the invitation and encouragement of his superiors he signed a statement indicating his loyalty to the Church. However, this was not sufficient to dissipate the suspicion which surrounded his teaching. In all probability this suspicion had been amplified by his preaching of evolutionism at every opportunity. Also, his rapport with the thought of Le Roy, and Le Roy's acknowledgement of his debt to Teilhard, had contributed. The ultimate result of all these circumstances was that Teilhard was ordered to leave his teaching position and depart for China early in 1926.[87]

---

[85] Ibid. [86] Ibid., p. 61. [87] Smulders, op. cit., p. 18.

Return to China. He arrived in China in June, 1926; and resumed his work with Licent. He was destined to remain there for the next twenty years, with only brief returns to France and excursions to the United States, Abyssinia, India, Burma and Java.

The Divine Milieu, key to Teilhard's religious thought, is dated during this period, having been written November, 1926-March, 1927.[88] In a letter dated November 7, 1926, he set forth the purpose of The Divine Milieu:

> I have finally decided to write my book on the spiritual life. I mean to put down as simply as possible the sort of ascetical or mystical teaching that I have been living and preaching so long. I call it Le Milieu divin, but I am being careful to include nothing esoteric and the minimum of explicit philosophy. What I intend to do is to confine myself to the realm of a moral attitude, vigorously presented but still incontestably Christian. I really mean to try to 'get across' and to have the book read. I think that if I could manage to get it printed, it would do good in two ways: it would spread ideas which I believe might open new frontiers for many minds, and at the same time my efforts might be rewarded by some sort of approval from the church.[89]

He later said of the writing of this work, "I want to write it slowly, quietly--living it and meditating on it like a prayer."[90] Publication of this work was denied in 1929, due primarily to suspicion relating to his evolutionism.[91]

It was also in 1926 that he stated the thesis that was to be developed in The Phenomenon of Man, which is considered his most important and characteristic work.[92] In a letter dated October 15, 1926, he said:

---

[88] Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 128; hereafter abbreviated DM.

[89] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, pp. 133-134. [90] Ibid., p. 134.

[91] Smulders, op. cit., pp. 19-20. [92] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 70.

> Especially during the last two years . . . I have felt gradually drawn to the study, not of prehistoric, but of present-day humanity. I am developing an increasingly clear concept of man as the supreme terrestrial phenomenon, in which the great geological processes and the still greater life-stream reach their culmination. In other words, I am discovering geology in its human prolongation. . . . My first aim would be to make those who study general human problems--geography, economics, political science--realize that the beings whom they study are truly geological phenomena of a surpassingly high order, and biological--or rather hyper-biological--phenomena of a surpassingly high degree of organization.
>
> Without realizing it, we are living in our planet's most dramatic and most eventful age; yet geologists, I know not why, study all the concentric spheres that make up the earth except one: that formed by the layer of thinking beings. To scholars specifically interested in man, geology is a closed book. What we have to do, therefore, is to unite the two points of view.[93]

In June, 1929, he was appointed Scientific Advisor to the Geological Survey of China, headquartered in Tientsin and later at Peking. He was the first Catholic to gain such official acceptance in China either in a Swedish, British or Chinese institution.[94] Increasingly, he took over the supervision and direction of the geological and paleontological aspects of the work at Choukou-tien. Although he was not the one who made the actual discovery of Sinanthropus, an important fossil of early man which was discovered there, he played an important and decisive role. In April, 1931, it was he who had first recognized a piece of quartzite which had been found at Choukou-tien to have been a "worked piece." Further research turned up many other such "worked pieces." Later, blackened objects found at the site were analyzed and found to be the charred remains of fire. Clearly, Sinanthropus, Peking man, had passed the thought barrier. He was man![95]

---

[93] Ibid., pp. 70-71, citing Teilhard.

[94] Ibid., pp. 77, 96.

On May 12, 1931, Teilhard set out with a group of Chinese companions on the Croisière Jaune expedition.[96] This two-year excursion had as its primary purpose a demonstration of the feasibility of using the Citroën company's half-track caterpillar tractors to explore over rough terrain.[97] Teilhard's purpose in accompanying this expedition, which he called "pseudo-scientific," was to become acquainted with Central Asia. He said, "The trip, ill suited though it was to research needs, was for me nothing less than a revelation of the geology of Asia."[98] The route he and his companions were to follow was from Peking to Chinese Turkestan west of Kashgar, then a west to east crossing of Sinkiang and Outer Mongolia.[99]

There was not a practicing Catholic other than Teilhard on the entire expedition. The fact that he was a priest and a Jesuit was at first resented; and he was the object of some maliciousness.[100] Once, when confronted by a member of the expedition who doubted the existence of God, he said, "God is a very simple choice, the choice between a Yes and a No, between a plus sign and a minus sign. This is a choice that none of us can escape. It is utterly impossible to get it wrong."[101] It seems that much of the resentment of Teilhard was overcome by his openness and pleasing manner during the months of the expedition. When he celebrated the Mass on New Year's Day, 1932, all his companions were present.[102]

---

[95] Ibid., p. 99. [96] Ibid., p. 125. [97] Barbour, op. cit., p.19.

[98] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 129, citing a letter by Teilhard, dated April 6, 1932.

[99] Barbour, op. cit., p. 18. [100] Cuenot, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

During the years which followed, Teilhard had much opportunity for close contact with an international community of scientists who were carrying on various kinds of research in China. This helped compensate for his virtual exile from France.

V. WORLD WAR II AND TEILHARD'S LATER YEARS

In 1938, he was appointed Director of the Laboratory of Advanced Studies in Geology and Paleontology in Paris; however, the outbreak of World War II made a return to France impossible.[103]

Isolation in China during World War II.

For all practical purposes, he was a prisoner in Peking from 1939 to 1946. His contacts with the outside world were irregular and limited. Even here he had to face prejudice and intolerance. When he had arrived in Peking in 1939, he was received by the Jesuit superior, who was not a particularly tolerant person. He told Teilhard at the first opportunity, "Father, as an evolutionist and a Communist, you are undesirable here, and will have to return to France as soon as possible."[104] When Teilhard replied that he was not a Communist, he said, "You are an evolutionist, and that is sufficient to show that you are a Communist."[105]

---

[101] *Ibid*., p. 132, citing Teilhard. [102] *Ibid*., p. 133.

[103] Julian Huxley, in Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 23; hereafter abbreviated *PM*.

[104] Cuenot, *op*. *cit*., p. 239.

However, Teilhard made the best of his circumstances. He worked in the Cenozoic Laboratory in Peking, cataloging and describing the enormous collection which had been stored there.[106] He also continued to write essays which reflected his religious interests, in addition to scientific papers.

He made use of the great amount of leisure during this period by reading much. Among the books of general interest, he read Camus, *The Plague*; Dostoievski, *The Possessed*; Gide, *Lectures on Dostoievski*; Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*; Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*; Sinclair Lewis, *Elmer Gantry*; Santayana, *The Last Puritan*; and Tolstoi, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, and *War and Peace*.[107]

Among non-fiction books with a religious theme, he read Barth, *God in Action*; Bastide, *Problems of the Mystical Life*; De Labriolle, *The Pagan Reaction*; Sir Arthur Evans, *The Earlier Religions of Greece in the Light of Cretan Discoveries*; F. Foerster, *Christ and Human Life*; Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*; Johans, *To Christ through Vedanta*; Marechal, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*; J. L. Myers, *Who Were the Greeks*?; Rougier, *Celsius*; and E. Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*.[108]

In the area of philosophy, he had read many of the works of Bergson, Blondel, Marx, Leibniz and Spinoza. In addition, he read Bachelard, *The New Scientific Spirit*; Concorcet, *Prospectus of an*

---

[105] *Ibid.* [106] *Ibid.*, p. 226. [107] *Ibid.* [108] *Ibid.*

Historical Table of the Progress of the Human Mind; Cournot, *On the Progress of Ideas and Events in Modern Times*; Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*; Gide, *The Future of Europe*; Gobineau, *Renaissance*; Gerald Heard, *The Ascent of Humanity*; Juvet, *The Structure of the New Physical Theories*; some of Nietzsche's works; Novalis, *Fragments*; Toynbee, *A Study of History*; and Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*.[109]

He was quite familiar with the works of Spengler and Toynbee in the philosophy of history, and expressed his admiration for them. He felt, however, that they separated the world of zoology from that of culture, even though they did treat human social evolution in terms of biology.[110]

Other works of general biology, ethnology and sociology read during this period were Marcel Blanchard, *Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians*; James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*; Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*; John Dewey, *Can Science Be Humanized*?; B. Malinowski, *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific*; P. A. Means, *The Ancient Civilization of the Andes*; J. Murphy, *Primitive Man: His Essential Quest*; E. Nordenskjoeld, *Origin of the Indian Civilization in South America*; Jean Rostand, *Thoughts of a Biologist*; and Oswald Spengler, *Man and Technics*.[111]

His readings in sociology serve to emphasize his interest in this area. He believed life has a social quality, noting that living things have a tendency to associate--from the insects, which are captives of the instinct to socialize, to man, whose collective activity offers the promise of self-transcendence.

---

[109] *Ibid*., pp. 236-237. [110] *Ibid*., p. 237. [111] *Ibid*.

Publication of The Phenomenon of Man denied. In 1944 he sent the manuscript of The Phenomenon of Man to Rome. After about four months he learned that permission to publish it had not been granted, and that it could only be considered for publication again if it were presented in a more acceptable form.[112] This experience, and other similar ones, caused him to suffer deeply. However, in the face of such adversity, he was able to recover a spirit of joy and optimism. He said, "It is absolutely necessary to keep smiling. The essential, and doubtless most frightful, gesture is to smile, with something of love in the smile."[113]

Return to France. In 1946 Teilhard returned to France.[114] He was now sixty-five years old, and was happy to be in his homeland again. Immediately, he set about re-establishing old contacts and making new ones. He attended many conferences and participated in several interesting debates.

He debated with Nicholas Berdyaev in May or June of 1946 on the subjects of Marxism and existentialism.[115] Again, in 1948, he met in a home with Berdyaev, Gabriel Marcel and Vladimir Lossky for another discussion.[116]

---

[112] Ibid., p. 246. [113] Ibid. [114] Smulders, op. cit., p. 20.

[115] Ibid. [116] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 261.

In 1947 he debated with Marcel on the spiritual value of human organization.[117] Marcel had for some years counterbalanced the influence of Teilhard.[118] Marcel presented a basically pessimistic view of man and accused Teilhard of holding a Promethean view. To support his pessimistic view, Marcel used the example of the sadistic medical experiments of the doctors at Dachau during World War II. Teilhard replied that he had never denied the perversity in intelligent men. The concentration camps emphatically illustrated the essence of evil, "which is the refusal of unity, integration and the love of God."[119] At the time of this debate, there was an irreducible opposition in the thought of these two men.

In May, 1947, Teilhard debated with Louis Lavelle, a representative of French university idealism, at the Catholic Centre of French Intellectuals. Approximately two-hundred and fifty people were present as they argued the meaning of matter.[120] Teilhard concluded that Lavelle lacked a proper interest in the world, for he considered it too much a means to an end.[121] In spite of this intellectual disagreement, they continued to be friends.

In 1948 Teilhard met with J. Hyppolite, a student of Heidegger and a representative of phenomenology and existentialism.[122] Three Marxist professors were also present. After the discussion, Teilhard commented, "Non-Christians psychologically do not know what we are talking about. . . . The notion, the experience of love, escapes them."[123] The discussion had centered around the subject of the future of humanity.[124] Teilhard pointed out that for himself it was essential to establish a point of planetary maturation. He reflected on the Marxist's willingness to approach openly the concept of an eschatology for a classless society, with point Omega as the point of natural convergence for humanity. However, he also noted the unwillingness to accept a mystical idea of a parousia, with the gradual movement of mankind toward an ecstatic union with God.[125] Hyppolite wrote that though there was not complete agreement between them, there was a direct sympathy.[126]

---

[117] Smulders, op. cit., p. 21. [118] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 221.

[119] Ibid., p. 253. [120] Smulders, loc. cit.

[121] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 254. [122] Ibid.

By 1946 Teilhard's work had taken on a new character. His efforts were now directed more than ever toward a synthesis of the facts he had accumulated during his career in the field, the laboratory and the study. His primary interest was anthropology and the religious, or mystical, extensions of the problems involved.[127]

Censure of his philosophical writings. A factor which created much suffering and hardship for him was Rome's opposition to the idea of evolution.[128] Primarily because of this opposition, he was told in September of 1947 to write no more philosophy.[129] This prohibition often placed him in an embarassing position, later, for he maintained that many of his essays were scientific, whereas others viewed them as philosophical speculations.

---

[123] Ibid. [124] Smulders, loc. cit.

[125] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 255, citing Teilhard. [126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., p. 288. [128] Ibid., p. 270. [129] Ibid., p. 266.

Sickness in 1947. At the instigation of his friend, Breuil, General Smuts, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, had invited him to make a visit to give an expert opinion on the large collection of fossils which had recently been gathered. While making preparation for this trip, he suffered a heart attack. This forced the cancellation of the trip and a period of several months' convalescence. He was bitterly disappointed.[130] In writing of his misfortune, he said:

> This is the occasion to remember Leon Bloy's very profound words which Termier liked to repeat in his misfortunes: 'Everything that happens is adorable" (provided, we should add, that we allow God to give a meaning to events, even seemingly absurd, through our confidence and our faith).[131]

He made use of his enforced leisure by completing Man's Place in Nature, a more scientific version of The Phenomenon of Man. He regarded this essay as the more important of the two.[132] He had tried to remove anything from it which might offend the censors; however, he was unsuccessful. In 1950, he was forbidden by Rome to publish this work.

Forbidden to become a candidate for a Professorship in the College of France. Teilhard's role in the world of science and French thought was recognized by an invitation to accept a chair at the College of France. He went to Rome in 1948 to confer with the General of his order about this matter. After much hesitation, the General refused to give him permission to accept the invitation.[133] This was another sharp disappointment, for this was the position of his old friend, Breuil, who had retired.

---

[130] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 293. [131] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 279.

[132] Ibid., p. 286. [133] Smulders, loc. cit.

Encouragement to become a secular priest. Some of Teilhard's friends had encouraged him from time to time to leave the Jesuits and become a secular priest. They felt this would give him more freedom to pursue his scientific career and to express his ideas.[134] He said, in response to this suggestion, "I should feel as if I were betraying the world were I to shirk from the place assigned me."[135] He said, "It would mean cutting myself off from my 'divine milieu'; I should be breaking the thread that binds me to the will of God, and I should no longer be able to entrust myself to its guidance."[136]

Father R. Jouve, a friend and fellow Jesuit, persuaded him to take legal steps to insure the preservation of his writings and their ultimate publication after his death. By 1951 the necessary steps had been taken and Teilhard had the comfort of knowing that someday his thought would be openly circulated in the scholarly world.[137]

---

[134] Cuenot, op. cit., pp. 117, 307.

[135] Ibid., p. 117, citing Teilhard.

[136] Ibid., p. 307, citing Teilhard.

[137] Raven, op. cit., p. 107. Ernst Benz, Evolution and Christian Hope: Man's Concept of the Future from the Early Fathers to Teilhard de Chardin, trans. Heinz G. Frank (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 210-211, gives the details of the effort to publish Teilhard's works after his death. It was impossible to secure the imprimatur. Their publication was insured through the formation of two committees composed of prominent scientists and men of letters under the patronage of Queen Marie-José of Italy. The scientific committee was composed of the directors of the most significant international geological, paleontological and archeological research institutes and museums, and included such men as Julian Huxley and Arnold Toynbee. The general committee was composed of a number of Teilhard's friends, among them a number of renowned writers and poets such as Georges Duhamel, André Malraux and André Siegfried. Publication was begun in Paris under the patronage of these two committees. Benz notes, p. 211: "We believe this is the first time in modern history that such an international scientific and intellectual elite was mobilized successfully against the threat of official action by Rome." These works are still in process of publication, nine volumes having already been produced.

New York period. In 1951 he was invited by officials of the Viking Fund, later to be called the Wenner Gren Foundation, to become a scientific advisor.[138] The purpose of this foundation is to encourage and support the study of anthropology. Teilhard spent the remainder of his life with this organization. He lived in New York, acquired many new friends and correspondents, and made occasional trips to supervise and check on work being sponsored and financed by the Foundation. He wrote of his new position:

> I envisage my work here as on three levels (each progressively more personal): Collaboration in the organization of world-wide research into human origins. (My 'grant' is earmarked 'research associate for palaeoanthropology'.) An attempt to deal scientifically with the problem of extending (and under what form?) the biological forces of evolution and speciation in contemporary man. And finally (and this concerns me alone) a continuation of my effort to synthesize the 'above' with the 'still-to-come', within a context of religious thought (a Christology) adjusted to the new dimensions of the universe.[139]

By 1952 the defenders of orthodoxy had begun to plague him again by publishing warnings against him. The United States, like Europe, was not ready to receive or understand his message.[140] The problem of misunderstanding and prejudice had followed him wherever he went. He felt this was a problem even among his friends. As early as 1918, he had felt that none of his best friends fully understood him.[141] He wondered if anyone would ever listen to him.[142] This misunderstanding was persistent. He wrote in his own defense to his brother in 1933,

---

[138] Smulders, loc. cit.

[139] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 308, citing Teilhard.

[140] Raven, op. cit., p. 111. [141] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 268.

[142] Ibid., p. 271.

"I've worked more for the Kingdom of God than anyone seems to think."[143]

Part of this problem arose from the type of language he used. He had respect for the past, but he was keenly aware of the material and spiritual needs of the present. He did not hesitate to speak to modern man" in present day scientific language, thereby performing simultaneously the prophetic, scientific, and apologetic functions."[144] In many of his works, such as "The Mass on the World," "Christ in the World of Matter," "The Spiritual Power of Matter," and others, he used the language of poetry. Many of his critics have failed to take this into consideration, and attempt to force a literal interpretation on his words.

In the face of such misunderstanding and misinterpretation, he had learned to accept all that happened without allowing it to shake his faith in God or his loyalty to the Church. He said his whole religion could be summed up in his often repeated statement, "Everything that happens is adorable," properly understood.[145] He had borrowed this statement from Pierre Termier, a geologist, scholar and Christian whom he admired and loved.[146] It summed up his religion, he said, "Provided . . . we allow God to give a meaning to events, even seemingly absurd, through our confidence and our faith."[147] This was not only a thought which comforted Teilhard, but he offered it to friends through the years when they faced tragedy or disappointment.[148]

---

[143] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 59.

[144] Petro Bilaniuk, "The Christology of Teilhard de Chardin," Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964 (Bronx, New York: Human Energetics Research Institute, Fordham University, 1964), p. 111.

[145] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 288. [146] Ibid.

[147] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 279.

By 1916, Teilhard recognized that his work might never be published and that he might die in obscurity.[149] However, he seemed to be prepared to lose his life for Christ.[150] On several occasions he spoke of a "passionate indifference," which characterized his outlook on life. In 1929 he wrote:

> I have the curious feeling of having lost the faculty of enjoying (or wishing) anything whatsoever in connection with myself; at the same time the supreme grandeur of the destiny of the universe, a business in which we are all engaged by the very fact of our existence, dominates me continually. This feeling is a sort of passionate indifference, in which all human frustrations or ambitions are, clearly, almost non-existent.[151]

Previously, in 1919, he had attempted to explain this "indifference," or detachment, not as a lack of interest, but as an attitude which has its source in "a sort of higher indifference (impassioned indifference) which is born of attachment, in all things, to what is above all."[152]

He felt this concept of detachment, or "indifference," to be quite important from an apologetic viewpoint. He felt that a misunderstanding of Christian resignation and detachment was "the principal source of the antipathies which make a great many Gentiles so sincerely hate the Gospel."[153]

---

[148] See his comforting words in a letter to Dr. and Mrs. Barbour on the death of their son in Barbour, op. cit., p. 147.

[149] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 156. [150] Ibid., pp. 91-92.

[151] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 118, citing Teilhard.

[152] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 119, citing Teilhard. See also Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 98-99.

[153] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 55. See also Cuenot, op. cit., p. 142, for Teilhard's contrast between Christian and Buddhist detachment.

He once wrote, "The saint is the man who Christianizes in himself all the human of his own time."[154] By this definition, he could be called a saint. Near the end of his life, he contemplated death and said, "I go forward to meet him who comes."[155] He prayed for "The grace to end well, in the way that will best advance the glory of Christ-Omega: this is the grace of graces."[156] He said in a letter to Breuil in January, 1955, that this was his great prayer. "One way or another," he said, "I mean my death to 'seal' that for which I have always lived."[157] The prayer to "end well" encompasses yet another prayer that he not die embittered, for he had met with many bitter disappointments.[158]

Teilhard was a man of genuine piety. He had expressed a desire to die on the day of the Resurrection.[159] He died on April 10, 1955, Easter Sunday; and was buried in the cemetery of the Jesuit novitiate at St. Andrews on the Hudson, about sixty miles from New York.[160]

Honors given Teilhard. Several honors partially compensate for his rejection by Rome. He was elected *Membre de l'Institut*, became a Corresponding Member of the *Académie des Sciences*, was made an officer of the Légion d'Honneur, and became a director of research of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

---

[154] Cuenot, *op. cit.*, p. 403, citing Teilhard.

[155] Teilhard de Chardin, *HU*, p. 100.

[156] *Ibid.*

[157] Teilhard de Chardin *LT*, p. 359.

[158] Cuenot, *op. cit.*, p. 368, citing Père Bergounioux, *L'Ame sacerdotale du Père Teilhard de Chardin*, p. 11.

[159] Teilhard, de Chardin, *LT*, p. 363.

[160] Cuenot, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

VI. AN EVALUATION OF TEILHARD'S LIFE AND PURPOSE

His view of life. In 1917, Teilhard said that life could be summed up for him by two elements: (1) "Absolute dependence on the creative and sanctifying energy of God, which alone can maintain rooted in us the passion for life, the passion for God. . . .";[161] and (2) "An invasion by the divinity of our whole environment, of all that we do, so that for us everything becomes the self-giving, transforming God."[162] Much later, in 1941, he said the formula for his life had become "to be in communion with Becoming."[163]

He was a selfless man of consistent kindness. His rule of life was stated in other terms in 1939:

> The rule that guides me in this: there can be no serious error to fear if my interior attitude results in my becoming more faithful, more attentive, more passionately interested in men and man's work--less concerned, at the same time, in a selfish way, with my own self.[164]

Again, in 1947, he said, "Nothing can stand up against affection and kindness--particularly when it is humbly sought for at its divine source."[165] These words are reminiscent of St. Paul's exhortation to overcome evil with good.

Teilhard's way of being heard was to seek, with God's help, to live his vision "fully, logically and without deviation."[166] Thus, he chose an effective method, for the example of a life controlled by conviction and principle is infectious.

---

[161] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 192.

[162] Ibid. [163] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 283.

[164] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 384, citing Teilhard.

[165] Ibid. [166] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 286.

His character and temperament. Teilhard was something of a paradox. He was a priest who was outwardly very little the ecclesiastic. He was at home in agnostic and atheistic intellectual circles. He assumed a place on the cutting edge of thought. He spent his life studying the characteristics of man as an animal. He specialized in the history of the past, yet his interest was only in the future. Overriding all his interests and commitments was his role as a priest, totally committed to the Church, faithful in spite of frustration and rejection.[167]

The wife of the French ambassador to Tokyo said of him, "Whoever has not seen Teilhard say Mass has seen nothing."[168] The widow of the French ambassador to Peking said:

> Everyone can make a masterpiece of his life; more have done so than one might think; but few have succeeded so well as Father Teilhard de Chardin. Every person of good will consciously or unconsciously strives to reproduce the example of Christ the God-man. I have never met anyone more earnestly devoted to this effort than Father Teilhard. . . . When with him, . . . one felt a better person.[169]

Helmut de Terra refers to Teilhard as "the most cherished and revered human being I ever met."[170] Only a rare man could evoke this almost universal response from people with such a wide variety of temperaments and background. Cuenot attempts to summarize the fundamental traits of Teilhard's temperament:

---

[167] Pierre Leroy, in Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 16.

[168] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 242, citing Mme. Arsène-Henry.

[169] Ibid., citing Mme. Henry Cosme. [170] Ibid., p. 160.

> The need to march in the vanguard, an appetite for facts, a horror of controversy, the knack of bringing to light the best in another's mind, and, finally, a wholesome progressive quality of thought which prevented a reactionary attachment to the past and a myopic concern with the present, and prompted him to move, confidently and energetically, with the times.[171]

Teilhard was ecumenical in outlook. George Barbour records an example of a woman with a Scottish Presbyterian background coming to Teilhard for solace during a period of trial. His response was to encourage her to learn what her church had to say, and she would find the comfort and strength she sought.[172]

His temperament was not that of a Reformer, in the sense of the sixteenth century Reformers. There was never a danger that he would leave the Church. He was "a radical theologian, conservative in churchmanship."[173] He met and faced many difficulties in his relation with the Church, but he was always able to recover his good humor and liveliness after a disappointment. His reaction to such experiences was, "It is absolutely necessary to keep smiling. The essential, and doubtless most fruitful, gesture is to smile, with something of love in the smile."[174]

The man. Jean Piveteau has paid tribute to his intellect by referring to him as one of the greatest minds in history.[175] H. L.

---

[171] Ibid., p. 18. [172] Barbour, op. cit., p. 84.

[173] H. C. Snape, "Two Jesuits and Their Church: Teilhard and Tyrrell," Modern Churchman, new series V (July, 1962), p. 260.

[174] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 246, citing Teilhard.

[175] H. L. Movius, Jr., "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., 1881-1955," American Anthropologist, LVIII (1956), p. 147.

Movius, Jr., of Harvard, has borne witness to his standing as a scientist by calling him "one of the outstanding paleoanthropologists, Pleistocene geologists, and Cenozoic vertebrate paleontologists of our time."[176] Others would voice similar evaluations, for only one with rare intellectual qualities could have made such strides in his chosen field of science, and at the same time conceived a synthesis such as that presented in The Phenomenon of Man and other writings.

Due to his own experiences and observations over the years, Teilhard was hostile to "accepted" judgments.[177] He learned that people could not be neatly categorized and that the contribution of others was valuable to the "building of the earth," as well as his own. He had learned to be open-minded as he was exposed to new thoughts and achievements.

He was a man whose personal piety could not be questioned. He was a man of prayer and deep spirituality, devout, but not fussily so. The mystical was as much a part of him as the material. He once said that all he wrote was the result of prayer.[178] He was a totally committed Christian who believed that when the road ahead is encompassed in darkness, the supreme, and only, prayer we can offer is that which Christ prayed on the Cross, " Into your hands I commend my spirit."[179] He was a man whose only audacity was "to have taken seriously both all the theological implications of the knowledge of the world and all the cosmological implications of Christian truth."[180]

---

[176] Jean Piveteau, in Teilhard de Chardin, Man's Place in Nature, trans. René Hague (London: Collins, 1966), p. 9; hereafter abbreviated MPN.

[177] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 106.

[178] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 36. [179] Ibid., p. 147.

His mission. Teilhard occupied himself with the study of man and the search for his real place in nature. In his statement of his mission there are significant apologetic overtones:

> To bring Christ, by virtue of properly organic connections, into the heart of Realities considered the more dangerous, the more naturalistic, the more pagan, such is my gospel and my mission.[181]

His purpose was that of an apostle; and truly he became one, an apostle to the gentiles.[182] He was able to influence many different types of minds, particularly the young. Cuenot has called him a great "catcher of souls."[183] People in many stations of life were attracted to him either by his great intellect or his kindness. Through his influence, "more than one" confirmed materialist was attracted toward faith and trust in God; and some came into a church.[184] His influence on the youth of France was significant, for he offered new hope to them in the face of the alternative of pessimistic existentialism.[185]

His concern for the whole phenomenon is a factor which magnetizes his interpretation of the fact of evolution and offers the greatest attraction for the "gentile."[186]

---

[180] Georges Crespy, "Teilhard de Chardin and Theology," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LV (December, 1964), 11.

[181] Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Prêtre," ET, pp. 298-299.

[182] Corte, op. cit., p. 17. [183] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 391.

[184] Ibid., p. 310. [185] Barbour, op. cit., p. 20.

[186] Arthur J. Knodel, "A Gentile's View," The World of Teilhard, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 79.

The great appeal of Teilhard's synthesis to the modern reader may be accounted for first of all by its content. Other factors are his own conviction and assurance that he is moving in the right direction, the poetic strength of his writing, and his rare way of moving almost imperceptibly from pure scientific judgment to intuitive thought.[187]

---

[187] Joseph V. Kopp, Teilhard de Chardin: A New Synthesis of Evolution (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1964), p. 8.

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF TEILHARD'S APOLOGETIC

The intention of this chapter is to delineate the scope of Christian apologetics and attempt to see Teilhard's purpose and approach against this background.

I. THE SCOPE OF APOLOGETICS

Definition of apologetics. Christian philosophy arose as a defense, or apology, against the attack of Greek philosophy.[1] Christians employed reason, the tool of philosophy, to meet the enemy on its own ground. Through the centuries many tools, reason being only one, have been employed to defend the integrity of Christianity from outside attack. It is often difficult to discern between apologetics, the defense of the faith against outside attack, and polemics, the counter-attack. Apologetics often imperceptibly becomes polemics.

Alan Richardson attempts to distinguish between "apology" and "apologetics." He defines "apology" as a defense of Christian truth, and "apologetics" as the way or means of defending that truth.[2] Consequently, "apologetics" is a study undertaken by Christians for

---

[1] Richard Kroner, Speculation and Revelation in the Age of Christian Philosophy (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.), p. 34.

[2] Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 19.

Christians,[3] and is to be distinguished from "apology," which is addressed to non-Christians.[4] Most writers, however, do not make such a distinction.

For present purposes, apologetics will be considered an attempt to defend Christian truth against outside attack by relating it to the broad spectrum of human knowledge and experience, thus revealing the Christian faith as a reasonable and possible alternative which may serve as a valid and meaningful basis for man's commitment and way of life.[5] It is primarily concerned with the implications of the revealed truth of Christianity for a rational understanding of the world and human existence. As such, though its primary thrust is toward the non-Christian, it often speaks a relevant word to the waverers within the Christian community as well.

Task of the apologist. The present age is hypnotized by the categories and methods of science. It is characterized by a loss of the sense of wonder as it views nature and a lack of the sense of reverence as it considers God. The dominant patterns of thought in our time are at best humanistic and at worst naturalistic.[6] Where the mystery of God is not respected and man thinks more highly of himself than he ought, alienation from God is not a surprising result. The task of the apologist is to reveal to contemporary men their estrangement from God,[7] from themselves and all creation.

---

[3] Ibid., p. 20. [4] Ibid.

[5] For further attempts to define apologetics, see W. Norman Pittenger, Rethinking the Christian Message (Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1956), p. 3, where he says, "The Latin word itself comes close to meaning 'reasonable justification'; and if it is defense at all, it is defense in a way very different from the whispered and timid apology of popular thought. It is defense in a bold and daring manner, in the sure confidence that Christianity can meet and overcome opposition because in it is the very truth of God Himself." See also William G. Pollard, Chance and Providence: God's Action in a World Governed by Scientific Law (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 23: "Apologetics . . . is a discourse between the faithful and the outside world which seeks to define the integrity and validity of the faith in terms which will be meaningful to those who do not share it."

Any approach taken by the apologist must rely heavily upon reason, but must be primarily concerned with the frustrations, tensions, alienation and estrangement felt by modern man.[8] The problem of the apologist is to reveal Christian answers to questions about existence and ultimate reality. He must also attempt to lead men by means of reason to ask the right questions, "for the answer to a question is to a large extent predetermined by the question itself."[9] In this light, it is Christian philosophy which leads to the right questions and Christian theology which offers the right answers.

St. Paul implies that the task of the Christian is to reveal the Incarnation as the key to a reasonable understanding of ourselves and the universe and to salvation.[10] The Incarnation is a major key to understanding Teilhard's religious thought and his apologetic approach.

The Christian apologist must reveal the idolatry of our time through illumination provided by the gospel.[11] He must also proclaim that human existence has meaning and purpose only in a commitment to the living God.[12] This proclamation must be in rational and understandable terms. However, the apologist must realize in his discourse with the non-Christian that "ultimately it will not be our reasoning but a direct encounter with God in Christ that will bring him to a decisive commitment in which he shares our faith."[13] The apologist must declare in positive terms his faith in the incarnate and redeeming Lord as the only path toward finding an ultimate purpose to human existence and achieving the ability to live in the world as man, when one is strongly tempted to live as a sophisticated but frustrated beast.[14] In order to accomplish these tasks, it is necessary for the apologist to relate biblical concepts to contemporary philosophy and science. With this in mind, he must defend the biblical imagery--the vehicle of Christian revelation--and reveal the deep truth about the transcendent deity which it expresses.[15]

---

[6] E. C. Rust, "The Apologetic Task in the Modern Scene," Review and Expositor, LVI (April, 1959), 187.

[7] Ibid., p. 195. [8] Ibid., p. 192. [9] Ibid., p. 194.

[10] Colossians 1:14-17. [11] Pittenger, op. cit., p. 5.

The existence of the Christian community creates the need for theology, the science which attempts to formulate categories by which, says Richardson, "the phenomena of Church-existence may be understood."[16] It is the function of the apologist to defend the theologian, his method and integrity. He must also impart to the non-theological mind the essence of the theologian's conclusions and their effectiveness as working hypotheses which make sense of the theological date.[17]

---

[12] Ibid., p. 6.

[13] Rust, op. cit., p. 192. Luke 16:31 also supports the assumption that neither reason nor empirical experience will "convince" one of the validity of the gospel: "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead."

[14] Pittenger, op. cit., p. 6 [15] Rust, op. cit., p. 198.

[16] Richardson, op. cit., p. 51.

[17] J. V. Langmead Casserley, Apologetics and Evangelism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 151.

In order to be effective, every defense of Christianity must have two characteristics. First, it must be rooted in the sources of Christian revelation. Second, it must take into consideration the demands of contemporary science and philosophy. Here it may be emphasized that the Christian apologist cannot hope to convince, but he may still strive to convert. As Michael Polanyi has said, "Though powerless to argue with the nihilist he may yet succeed in conveying to him the intimation of a mental satisfaction which he is lacking; and this intimation may start in him a process of conversion."[18]

II. TEILHARD'S APOLOGETIC PURPOSE

In light of these considerations of the nature and scope of apologetics, we move to an analysis of Teilhard's purpose.

His purpose as viewed by others. A few writers have claimed either that Teilhard was not an apologete or that his purpose was not primarily apologetic.[19] Such an interpretation of his work is either different in its view of the degree of apologetic thrust or is contradictory to the great mass of interpretation of Teilhard's work.

Many have recognized in him the attempt to synthesize science and religion. Helmut de Terra states that this was Teilhard's main concern.[20] In the same vein of thought, Cyril Vollert suggests that Teilhard's chief purpose was "to rescue evolution from materialism and to restore it to its rightly spiritual domain."[21] In this sense his aim was the same as that of Leibniz, who sought to show that science and religion are compatible and can be united.[22] Crespy admits that Teilhard conceived his mission as one of assuring "the presence and action of the same God in the twofold reading of the cosmos explored by science and of scripture explored by theology."[23] However, he apparently does not see this as a primarily apologetic purpose.[24] Cuenot speaks of Teilhard's apologetic and missionary vocation.[25] He also mentions his apologetic preoccupation,[26] as does Corte.[27] Pierre Leroy concurs in this evaluation.[28] George Barbour has said Teilhard's basic purpose was to reveal the Christian God.[29] Henry de Lubac has seen that Teilhard's purpose was to win the admission that "in the final reckoning . . . there reappears . . . in our universe seen through the most modern eyes, the face of God."[30] Murray sees Teilhard's goal as attempting to lead unbelievers to a confrontation with Christ.[31]

---

[18] Michael Polanyi, Science, Faith and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 81.

[19] Gustave Weigel, "The Phenomenon of Teilhard de Chardin," The World of Teilhard, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 165; Georges Crespy, "Teilhard de Chardin and Theology," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LV (December, 1964), 12; Martin Jarrett-Kerr, in the preface of Nicolas Corte, op. cit., p. xiv.

---

[20] Helmut de Terra, Memories of Teilhard de Chardin (London: Collins, 1964), p. 89.

[21] Cyril Vollert, "Toward Omega: the Vision of Man," Theology Digest, VIII (Autumn, 1960), 133. See also Cuenot, op. cit., p. 211: "Teilhard's interest was to determine under what conditions an evolution become conscious of itself might continue its task, and to show that Christianity, rightly understood, and broadened to the dimensions of our new cosmos, answers those requirements." Henry de Lubac, op. cit., p. 15, says, "Starting from the 'evolutionary views' which had at first led them astray, he wished to bring them back to the 'traditional concepts of a God who exercises an intellectual influence on immortal monads, distinct from himself'." Paul Chauchard, Teilhard de Chardin on Love and Suffering, trans. Marie Chene (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966), p. 15, says, "Teilhard's twofold mission was to establish the superstructures of science, as a scientist, and to explore the inner structures of faith, as a believer." See also Pierre Leroy's statements in Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 38.

[22] Kroner, op. cit., p. 146. [23] Crespy, op. cit., p. 13.

[24] Ibid., p. 12. [25] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 214. [26] Ibid., p. 213.

[27] Corte, op. cit., p. 91. [28] Leroy, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

From a Christian perspective, Teilhard attempted to present a constructive and convincing answer to naturalistic atheism. Therefore, it may be concluded that he was primarily an apologist.[32] Herein lies the overwhelming weight of the evaluation of Teilhard's work.

His purpose as he stated it. Within Teilhard was a passion for the world and a passion for God. It was precisely because of these two "loves" that he felt himself qualified to speak with those who "worship the universe."[33] His passion for the world was explained in a letter to a cousin in 1917: "For me the real earth is that chosen part of the universe, still almost universally dispersed and in course of gradual segregation, but which is little by little taking on body and form in Christ."[34] This passion, along with his Christological interpretation of it, are discussed below.

As a priest, Teilhard sought to reconcile the Christian faith in the supernatural with the humanistic faith in the future developments of mankind.[35] In 1936 he wrote, "For a long time now, my chief interest in life has lain in some sort of effort towards a plainer disclosing of God in the world."[36] He spoke of this as his only true vocation, from which nothing could turn him.[37] In speaking of the attraction the resurrected Christ exerted on men, he referred to his approach as an "apologetics of immanence."[38] Thus, it can be seen that he thought in apologetic terms and related his work to the field of apologetics.[39]

---

[29] Barbour, *op. cit.*, p. 132. [30] de Lubac, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[31] Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[32] Christian d'Armagnac, "La Pensée du P. Teilhard comme apologétique," *Nouvelle revue theologique*, LXXXIV (June, 1962), 619.

[33] Teilhard de Chardin, *MM*, p. 165. [34] *Ibid*.

In the preface to The Divine Milieu, which is the key to his religious thought, he addressed himself to apologetic needs. He said:

> This book is not specifically addressed to Christians who are firmly established in their faith and have nothing more to learn about its beliefs. It is written for the waverers, both inside and outside; that is to say for those who, instead of giving themselves wholly to the Church, either hesitate on its threshold or turn away in the hope of surpassing it.[40]

It can be seen from this statement that his apologetic is addressed to both Christian and non-Christian. He supported this approach again in a letter to a friend in 1925:

> I am slowly putting together the elements of a 'divinization' (of the earth) ad usum Christianorum . . . which will continue the 'hominization' written ad usum gentilium which I have not yet shown you. Both together will be my apologetic, an apologetic based on evolution yet whose spirit seems to me to be truly and equally Christian.[41]

---

[35] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 363. [36] Ibid., p. 219.

[37] Ibid. [38] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 250.

[39] See Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'une dialectique de l'esprit," L'Activation de l'énergie. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963), pp. 147-158, for a discussion of the successive stages of his apologetic. This volume is hereafter abbreviated AE.

[40] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 11.

[41] Christopher F. Mooney, Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 193, citing Teilhard.

He referred again to his "apologetic" in an essay of 1924, entitled "Mon Univers."[42]

In light of all this testimony from Teilhard himself and also from the majority of his interpreters, it seems reasonable to call him an apologist and his work an apologetic.

III. TEILHARD'S VIEW OF THE APOLOGETIC SITUATION

Consideration has been given to Teilhard's apologetic aims and purpose. Now a survey will be made of his view of the modern situation which calls for an apologetic response by the Christian.

Modern unbelief. Teilhard considered the spirit of defeatism the besetting temptation of the time.[43] Coupled with this spirit is the feeling of boredom which has been brought about by mechanization. A large quantity of unused human energy exists and is growing at a disturbing rate. Mankind is bored. Men do not know what to do with themselves. Boredom is public enemy number one.[44]

The Christian Church makes little appeal to the masses of people today. It lacks the ingredients of human faith and hope, without which any religion appears colorless, cold and inassimilable.[45] Many non-Christians view the Church as leading its followers away from, or to one side of, humanity, rather than into and beyond it. The suspicion that Christianity makes its adherents inhuman produces the greatest objection of the non-Christian.[46] This is "the real source of the distrust which insulates entire blocks of humanity from the influence of the Church."[47] Christianity is viewed as causing men to lose interest in the common task rather than harnessing them to it. A non-Christian might say that Christianity diminishes and distorts men, and add:

---

[42] Teilhard de Chardin, "Mon Univers," Science et Christ (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965), p. 67; hereafter abbreviated SC.

[43] Teilhard de Chardin, "We Must Save Mankind," Building the Earth (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin Cahier I. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958), p. 49.

[44] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on the Spiritual Repercussions of the Atom Bomb," FM, p. 145.

[45] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," FM, pp. 265-266.

> Moreover don't they admit as much themselves? And if one of their religious, or one of their priests, should happen to devote his life to what is called profane research, he is very careful, as a rule, to recall that he only lends himself to these secondary pursuits for the sake of conforming to a fashion or an illusion, to prove that Christians are not the most stupid of men. When a Catholic works with us, we invariably get the impression that he is doing so in an insincere way, condescendingly. He appears to be interested, but in fact, because of his religion, he does not believe in the human effort. His heart is not really with us. Christianity creates deserters and false friends: that is what we cannot forgive.[48]

Teilhard continued, discussing the feeling of isolation and insulation from the world experienced by some Christians:

> What Christian who has become aware of a sheet of glass insulating him from his non-believing colleagues, has not asked himself uneasily whether he was not on a false tack or had not actually lost touch with the main current of mankind?[49]

He considered the Church's lack of interest in human aspirations, its basic mistrust of progress and its withdrawal from responsibility in temporal affairs the major contributing factors to modern unbelief.[50]

---

[46] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 37. [47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., pp. 37-38. [49] Ibid., p. 38.

[50] For a discussion of this situation, see Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Incroyance moderne," SC, pp. 152-153.

In the process, the world is now being converted to a kind of natural religion of the universe which turns away from the God of the Gospel, and in this its unbelief consists.[51] The world has discovered the immensity of space and time and a kind of religion of universalism and futurism has resulted. It is a religion which tends to be pantheistic, immanent, organic and evolutive; whereas Christianity is chiefly expressed in terms of personality, transcendence, legal relations and fixism. In essence, a conflict is arising, not between belief and unbelief, but between two different kinds of belief--between the religion of earth and the religion of heaven.[52] This is an extremely significant point in Teilhard's analysis of the apologetic situation, for his entire apologetic approach is determined and governed by it. He sought to discover the conditions of true progress,[53] and the means of purifying the treasures of this world.[54] He felt his Christian faith imposed on him the right and duty to throw himself into the things of the earth.[55]

The need for optimism. Nothing is more dangerous for the future than an attitude of pessimism.[56] The spirit, with its accompanying discouragement, must be overcome.[57] He chose optimism over pessimism, feeling this the only position in keeping with the observable phenomena and the only choice which gives meaning to existence.[58] He recognized that mankind is divided basically into two camps--those who deny the significance or value of existence and those who believe in its future.[59] He defended his own choice of optimism by saying, "of the alternatives that are offered we must choose the one which seems best able to develop and preserve in us the highest consciousness. If we turn out to have been wrong in this, then the Universe has no less gone astray."[60] In other words, he was willing to bet his life on a belief in the ultimate value of the tangible evolution of things.[61] In a letter written from Peking in 1941 he said:

---

[51] Ibid., p. 153.

[52] Teilhard de Chardin, "Quelques réflexions sur la conversion du monde," SC, pp. 158-159.

[53] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 302.

[54] Ibid., p. 239.

[55] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 39.

[56] Teilhard de Chardin, "Faith in Peace," FM, p. 149.

[57] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 254-257.

> Everything strengthens my conviction that the future can be forced and led only by a group of men united by a common faith in the spiritual future of the earth. "Get behind me," I would make bold to say, "all Godless pessimists and all Christian pessimists." We must take up again, on a sounder scientific basis and as a more exact philosophical concept, the idea (or, if you prefer it, the "myth") of progress. This is the essential setting in which I see the simultaneous rebirth of humanism and Christianity.[62]

He sought to rip the mask of atheism from the new currents of thought in the world and to expose them as Christian, to reveal their strong, genuine and total coherence with the Christian faith. This, he said, will be my whole "apologetic."[63] He also sought to meet the great psychological need of modern man for some assurance that the earthly progress for which he is struggling will meet with some success.[64] He made an effort to offer this assurance on the levels of science, philosophy and theology.

---

[58] Teilhard de Chardin, "Does Mankind Move Biologically upon Itself?." FM, pp. 251-252.

[59] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 42.

[60] Ibid., p. 49. [61] Ibid., p. 42.

[62] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 277.

[63] Mooney, op. cit., p. 192, citing letters of Teilhard.

Teilhard has often been accused of being a blind optimist with no sense of the solitary and individual anguish of men.[65] However, this charge is refuted by many who are most familiar with his work and who knew him personally. Although agreeing that he was indeed an optimist, Pierre Leroy says that he was far from being one personally in daily life. Often he was depressed and had almost no inclination to carry on. He says of Teilhard:

> The agonizing distress he already had to face in 1939 was intensified in the following years, and he sometimes felt that he could venture no further. During that period he was at times prostrated by fits of weeping, and he appeared to be on the verge of despair. But, calling on all the resources of his will, he abandoned himself to the supremely Great, to his Christ, as the only purpose of his being; and so hid his suffering and took up his work again, if not with joy, at least in the hope that his own personal vocation might be fulfilled.[66]

M. Barthélemy-Madaule also points out his sense of anguish,[67] along with Cuenot, who adds that Teilhard's optimism was not blind; rather, his spirit was aggressive and contagious, "because founded on absolute hope, and justified by the synthesis of Christian faith and faith in progress."[68]

---

[64] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 67.

[65] Leopold Malevez, "The Method of Teilhard and Phenomenology," Theology Digest, VIII (Autumn, 1960), 140.

[66] Leroy, op. cit., p. 36.

[67] Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule, "Teilhard de Chardin, Neo-Marxism, Existentialism: A Confrontation," International Philosophical Quarterly, I (December, 1961), 657-659. See also her Bergson et Teilhard de Chardin (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963).

It is difficult to understand how one could accuse Teilhard of a blind optimism which is insensitive to personal anguish after reading a passage like this one:

> I felt the distress intrinsic to an atom lost in the universe, the distress which makes human wills founder daily under the crushing number of living things and of stars. And if something saved me, it was hearing the voice of the Gospel, guaranteed by divine successes, speaking to me from the depth of the night: ego sum, noli timere (It is I, be not afraid).[69]

Hope is the key to Teilhard's message, and herein lies the contrast between him and thinkers like Barth or Kierkegaard. Instead of speaking in terms of scandal, risk, leap or paradox, instead of leading men to a precipice and encouraging them to jump, he lowered barriers, built bridges, talked of convergence, and raised the cross like a beacon, leading men to it step by step. However, in observing Kierkegaard's work as a whole, Murray observes that "he also uses a step by step method, leading men from the aesthetic, to the ethical, to the religious stage with its hope in 'eternal happiness.'"[70] Murray continues: "While Kierkegaard lays most stress on guilt and dread, Teilhard also tries to shock the humanist out of his ill-founded optimism."[71]

It was in his optimism about the future of the earth and mankind that Teilhard established a point of contact with the youth and Marxists.

---

[68] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 221.

[69] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 49-50. See also pp. 117-118.

[70] Murray, op. cit., p. 163.

[71] Ibid.

This was the bridge which later would allow him to express to them his faith in God. Herein lies his apologetic approach. When he attributed a value to the universe which others view as excessive, says de Lubac, he is "looking at it in 'its concrete advance, now actually in progress' whose Term is supernatural."[72] Thus, he "anticipates in his faith, even while enclosed in the opacity of the material world, the state of the world transfigured in God."[73]

Teilhard believed the world needs a fervent love of growth and being. His enthusiasm is adequately expressed in this statement: "Down with the cowards and the sceptics, the pessimists and the unhappy, the weary and the stagnant."[74] For him, any road other than that of optimism is a dead end.

The need to reconcile believers and unbelievers. Teilhard was quite concerned about the attitude of Christians and non-Christians toward each other. He wondered why so many unbelievers see only the stumbling-blocks within the church.[75] He was always ready to discuss Christianity with any who wished to know about it. He was not willing to force consciences and ruin the impression he had made as a priest who was at home in the world of international science and an admirable and desirable companion.[76]

---

[72] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 157. [73] Ibid., pp. 157-158.

[74] Teilhard de Chardin, "Thoughts on Progress," Cahier I, p. 74.

[75] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 59.

[76] Cuenot, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

He found within religious circles an opposition to the scientific attitude. Evolution was equated with materialistic monism.[77] His life was spent combating this misunderstanding and pleading that evolution must be spiritually oriented. He also found that "nine times out of ten a believing Christian is, as regards Man, a 'sceptic'."[78] He considered this a stumbling-block to unbelievers. On the other hand, he found that some made a religion of science. They have "had faith in finding a faith, an experience."[79] Through his analysis of the modern scene, he came to believe that there are aspects of the real world which are as closed to some Christians as the world of faith is to non-Christians.[80]

Teilhard recognized a vast amount of goodness and beauty outside the Church, and he believed this could come to fruition only in Christ. We must recognize such qualities in people and "we must give them our sympathy if we are to be fully Christian ourselves, or if we are to assimilate them to God."[81] He became deeply aware of the need to reconcile, on the basis of a love of natural progress," the claims and absolutes of believers and unbelievers--each being able, later on, to add to his human work the principles and corollaries that his more or less enlightened good faith reveals to him."[82] If the Gospel of Christ is ever to guide man's most creative and adventurous efforts, Christians must touch those who are responsible for the economic, political, cultural and scientific development of society. There must be a spiritualizing of earthly values and a march toward the future.[83] There must be at the same time an exaltation of the spirit of the earth and the spirit of God. This is the only way man can truly become man; and "the more Man is Man, the more he will feel the need to devote himself to something which is bigger than he is."[84]

---

[77] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 167.

[78] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 363, citing Teilhard.

[79] Teilhard, de Chardin, "La Mystique de la science," L'Énergie humaine (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1962), p. 222; hereafter abbreviated EH.

[80] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 66. [81] Ibid., p. 127.

[82] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 121.

The need for a neo-humanity and a neo-Christianity. Teilhard's apologetic is based on faith in the world, which in turn is revealed as a faith in man, and ultimately a faith in God. The Church authorities in Rome saw neither its timeliness nor reliability.[85] He believed that the terms "Christian" and "human" tend no longer to coincide; and he viewed this as the great schism which plagues the Church.[86] Believers who are insufficiently human do great damage Christianity. Their religion, he said, "does not, as its first effect, make them more faithful to the duties and problems of their own day."[87] It was heartening to him to find a genuinely holy man who urged one to be himself.[88] In his opinion, the Church needs to be humanized and the world needs to be Christianized. As Cuenot says, "All Teilhard's efforts were devoted to the creation of a new humanism of which Christ the Evolver is the centre."[89] He felt it necessary to prove that Christianity in no way makes one less human. He once wrote:

---

[83] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Incroyance moderne," SC, p. 153.

[84] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Spirit of Earth," Cahier I, p. 62.

[85] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 271, citing Teilhard.

[86] Teilhard de Chardin, "Note pour servir à l'évangélisation des temps nouveaux," La Parole attendue (Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin IV. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963), p. 13; hereafter cited as Cahier IV.

[87] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 233. [88] Ibid., p. 127.

> I believe that unbelievers are mistaken about the value of these new human virtues that they prefer to sanctity, or at least that in imagining that they can cultivate them outside religion, they set humanity an impossible task. But at the same time I think we Christians, for our part, have a great deal to "humanize" our sanctity--without, of course, doing violence to the dogmas we hold.[90]

Teilhard believed that our future salvation depends on a neo-humanism which can and must be transfigured into new life by Christian thought.[91] The neo-humanism of which he spoke is "an evolutive neo-humanism dominated by (defined as) the conviction that there is an 'ultra-human'."[92]

There are two trends of thought today, one towards Christ and the other towards mankind. He said, "To accept that in terms of the divine purpose the two impulses are one--is to define in its essentials and in all its splendour, the attitude of Christian humanism."[93] For the Christian humanist, faithful to the theology of the Incarnation, "there is neither separation nor discordance, but coherent subordination, between the genesis of Mankind in the World and the genesis of Christ in Mankind through His Church."[94] For a new humanism directed towards the future, we need a Christianity which has been deepened and rethought in the dimensions of the new world around us.[95] Christianity ought to be more human, and Christians ought to be the most human of men.

---

[89] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 405. [90] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 222.

[91] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 354.

[92] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 377, citing Teilhard.

[93] Teilhard de Chardin, "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, p. 34.

[94] Ibid.

The theme of his "The Heart of the Problem" is the need for the Christian faith in the "Above" to incorporate a faith in a "still-to-come."[96] A faith in a "still-to-come", according to Teilhard, "is born . . . of the objective emergence of the ultra-human (releasing a neo-humanism, and automatically entailing a neo-Christianity)."[97] This approach, he says, "is not an arbitrarily chosen tactical move *ad usum* infidelium. It represents *hic et nunc* a condition of survival for an increasing number of Christians."[98] The Church must now choose between Christianizing neo-humanism and condemning it. It is a current problem and the time for decision is short. Many have objected to the term "neo-Christianity"; however, de Lubac clarifies Teilhard's meaning, and so defends him, perhaps better than any of his interpreters:

> Père Teilhard calls for, and himself seeks for, a rejuvenation of the Christianity we know to be immortal, 'not by structural alteration but by assimilation of new elements'. If he occasionally used the unfortunate term 'neo-Christianity', what he meant by it, as he made clear himself, was the 'Christianizing of a neo-humanism',--which was not his own invention. In his view, it was 'the "humanist" problem now "present in a completely new form"'. This called for a new and almost unprecedented effort to find a Christian solution to the problem, and for that we must look to the marvellous 'power of growth' that is peculiar to Christianity.[99]

---

[95] Barbour, *op. cit.*, p. 124, citing a letter from Teilhard.

[96] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," *FM*, pp. 260-269.

[97] Cuenot, *op. cit.*, p. 271, quoting Teilhard.

[98] *Ibid.*, quoting a letter of Teilhard dated October 29, 1949.

[99] de Lubac, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

IV. TEILHARD'S APPROACH

The role of intuition. There are basically two ways of knowing: (1) an intuitive grasping of wholes, and (2) an analysis of the various parts which make up a whole.[100] Teilhard chose the former way, emphasizing the materialistic illusion in which many find themselves entrapped, which "consists in regarding as more real, the elements of the analysis than the terms of the synthesis."[101] Though many scientists are caught up in this illusion, the scientific method itself gives evidence of an intuitive grasping of wholes.[102] This implies that the scientist is dealing with a "given." The great scientific advances have come by intuitive hunches in which empirical observation and rational argument had no part, and much of the older theory and many of its models have been antiquated. Polanyi has expressed this sentiment, and concludes that scientific discovery "must involve an intuitive perception of the real structure of natural phenomena."[103] He has pointed out that every perception of nature, scientific or not, has its basis in some intuitive conception of the general nature of things.[104] W. H. Thorpe, a noted biologist, has joined in this sentiment.[105] As a Christian, Teilhard intuited God as behind, in, and beyond the process.[106] He always presented the particulars of his basic intuition as tentative, realizing, as does Polanyi, that "intuition is always imperfect."[107]

---

[100] Eric C. Rust, "The Holy Spirit, Nature and Man," Review and Expositor, LXIII (Spring, 1966), 165; see also his "Christian Faith and Scientific Knowledge," Philosophy Today, IX (Winter, 1965), 285.

[101] Teilhard de Chardin, How I Believe (Peiping: H. Vetch, printer, 1936), p. 17. This work was privately printed by the author for circulation to personal friends only. It remains unpublished. The copyright is claimed by Fondation Teilhard de Chardin. I am endebted to Dr. George Barbour for making this material available to me. This work is hereafter abbreviated HB.

[102] Rust, "Christian Faith and Scientific Knowledge," p. 285.

[103] Michael Polanyi, Science, Faith and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 25.

[104] Ibid., p. 10.

I. T. Ramsey concludes that parallels to religious intuition can be found outside religious experience, in situations where special discernment yields more than is observed. When this happens, the situations "come alive."[108] He suggests, therefore, a kinship of religion and science based on such intuitions or disclosures.[109] Richardson observes that most original scientific hypotheses are not arrived at by observation and induction, but rather by flashes of insight or intuitions.[110] He also notes that it is likely to be overlooked that when we think of scientists or philosophers "as using methods of reason and induction while the poet or religious man uses intuition and imagination, we are making a distinction which exists in theory . . . rather than in fact."[111]

George Boas observes that an hypothesis must be formulated before any theory can be set forth, and that the origin of an hypothesis is in the imagination.[112] The religious intuitions, or revelations, of man may be considered "inspired imagination" in the sense that God's truth comes to him in an act of inspired thinking which takes the shape of certain images.[113] Intuitive awareness in both science and religion suggests that there are certain depths in nature beneath what is empirically evident. One may observe that unfettered intuitive speculation could lead to absurd conclusions, while too close an adherence to any set of rules might paralyze the spirit of discovery. In the case of the scientist, his scientific conscience transcends his creative impulses and his critical caution.[114] Polanyi suggests that "we recognize the note struck by conscience in the tone of personal responsibility in which the scientist declares his ultimate claims. This indicates the presence of a moral element in the foundations of science."[115]

---

[105] W. H. Thorpe, Biology and the Nature of Man (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 116.

[106] This is in keeping with the Biblical approach, in which the insight of faith sees God's revelation as bound up with particular acts of history. Within the framework of the believer's faith commitment, God is seen in historical acts. In other words, he intuits a meaning, based on his faith commitment. This is what Teilhard has done.

[107] Polanyi, op. cit., p. 37.

[108] I. T. Ramsey, Religion and Science: Conflict and Synthesis (London: S.P.C.K., 1964), pp. 6 ff.

[109] Ibid. [110] Richardson, op. cit., p. 46. [111] Ibid.

In science, it is observation that supplies the clues for understanding reality. In turn, a new clue is provided by which an understanding of future observations may be gained. In this manner the processes of discovery and verification are propagated. In both these processes, an intuition of relationship between observation and reality is at work. Therefore, concludes Polanyi, the process of verification "rests ultimately on mental powers which go beyond the application of any definite rules."[116] The scientist must be careful not to identify the model by which he seeks to understand nature with the structure of nature itself. It is also true that religious men should not identify their apologetic too closely with the contemporary models involving chance and probability. As Rust says, "Indeed, religious faith stands to lose as much in a universe dominated by chance as in one dominated by mechanistic determinism."[117]

---

[112] George Boas, The Limits of Reason (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 127.

[113] Austin Farrar, The Glass of Vision (London: Dacre Press, 1948), p. 57.

[114] Polanyi, op. cit., p. 41. [115] Ibid.

An aspect of nature may be observed over a long period of time without any new insight being gained. Then, one may suddenly see a pattern; and, as Ramsey says, the "penny drops."[118] In that moment a disclosure takes place. Something is known that was not known before, even though no new data have been supplied. This situation is repeated over and over in science as well as religion. It is through this process of intuition that a disclosure occurs; the penny drops; and one becomes aware of God in a particular situation. However, this intuitive awareness of God is only the threshold of faith. Religious faith is a response to that something which grips one from the outside.

The apologist must recognize that argument really has little to do with religious commitment. At best it can only evoke an insight or intuition out of which the faith commitment may or may not follow. Apologetics can only make faith more reasonable and real. It can not create it. The apologist and the preacher can only defend Christianity in such terms that the gospel is clearly stated, and hope the "penny drops." He can never rationally compel faith, for faith is not a rational process.

---

[116] Ibid., p. 29.

[117] Rust, "Christian Faith and Scientific Knowledge," p. 283.

[118] Ramsey, op. cit., p. 8.

Teilhard recognized the nature of intuition and the possibility of more than one interpretation of a so-called "fact." He observed that there are no "bare" facts.[119] No fact exists in absolute isolation. In order to properly interpret a "fact" one must adopt the right standpoint for "seeing" it.[120] In fact, "to see," rather than to explain, is the sole purpose of The Phenomenon of Man.[121] By "seeing" he means to be illumined, or to intuit. In building his understanding of nature and God he relied upon intuitive choices. He often observed that many of his propositions are not rigidly deductive or conclusive, but depend upon intuition.[122] He defended his choices by suggesting that though many of them could not be proven, they were yet in accord with the facts and were not unreasonable. The act of believing involves a choice, an intuition. Teilhard said, "To believe, is therefore finally, to develop an act of synthesis, of which the first origin is impossible to grasp."[123] He recognized the presence and nature of intuition in his own thought by noting, "There are temperaments in which intuition is born from an excess of tension or vital ardour much more than from methodical effort: and probably it's to this type that I incline. I am much more enthusiast than scholar."[124]

---

[119] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 30.

[120] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Natural Units of Humanity," The Vision of the Past, trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Collins, 1966), p. 199; hereafter abbreviated VP.

[121] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 58.

[122] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 225.

[123] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 10.

To perceive God's presence in the world is an act of seeing. It is an intuition which cannot, says Teilhard, "be attained directly by any process of reasoning, nor by any human artifice. It is a gift . . . ."[125] Only one thing prevents men from responding to the God who encompasses us on all sides--the inability to see him.[126] Through its mysticism, as well as through doctrine, Christianity transmits and develops a direct intuition of a personalized center of total convergence for all consciousness.[127] He identified this center of convergence with Christ, and said:

> The least that an unbeliever can admit today, if he understands the biological situation of the World, is that the figure of Christ . . . is, so far, the most perfect approximation to a final and total object towards which the universal human effort can tend without becoming wearied or deformed.[128]

It is the Universal Christ, the Word Incarnate, that binds all things together. He observed:

> What is . . . the concrete link which binds all . . . universal entities together and confers on them a final power of gaining hold of us?
>
> The essence of Christianity consists in asking oneself that question, and in answering: 'The Word Incarnate, Our Lord Jesus Christ.'[129]

This statement about the Christ is based on an intuitive ability to

---

[124] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 106.

[125] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 111. [126] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[127] Teilhard de Chardin, "We Must Save Mankind," Cahier I, pp. 55-56.

[128] Ibid., p. 56. [129] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 100.

"see." Essentially, the whole of life lies in the verb, "to see." He said, "To see or to perish is the very condition laid upon everything that makes up the universe, by reason of the mysterious gift of existence."[130] For Teilhard, to see is to become more,[131] and one must see dynamically, not statically.[132] Fuller being is closer union; and union increases through increased consciousness, or vision.[133]

Intuition is the basis of Teilhard's entire synthesis. His sense of the Divine Milieu, or the presence of God, was achieved through this channel. He noted:

> No one can compel the spirit, the gaze or the light of God to descend upon him.
>
> On some given day a man suddenly becomes conscious that he is alive to a particular perception of the divine spread everywhere about him. Question him. When did this state begin for him? He cannot tell. All he knows is that a new spirit has crossed his life.[134]

Georges Crespy has recognized the intuitive nature of Teilhard's synthesis and has seen his fundamental intuition as being that the world is bound up with God by Christ.[135] In order to understand any of Teilhard's work, it is necessary to view it in relation to his fundamental intuition of the Divine Milieu, which sees Christ as all-in-everything, and the universe as moved and permeated by God in the totality of its evolution.

---

[130] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 31. [131] Ibid., p. 33.

[132] Teilhard de Chardin, "Catholicisme et science," SC, p. 240.

[133] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 31.

[134] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 108.

[135] Georges Crespy, "Evolution and Its Problems," (Lecture delivered at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1965), p. 21. (Mimeographed)

The faith principle: subjectivity versus objectivity. Everyone has a set of values. All knowledge is subjective, or personal, for our starting points are subjective. According to Teilhard, scientists are beginning to realize that:

> even the most objective of their observations are steeped in the conventions they adopted at the outset and by forms or habits of thought developed in the course of the growth of research; so that, when they reach the end of their analyses they cannot tell with any certainty whether the structure they have reached is the essence of the matter they are studying, or the reflection of their own thought.[136]

Everyone has a faith-principle, a presupposition, a commitment. Polanyi observes, "The curious thing is that we have no clear knowledge of what our presuppositions are and when we try to formulate them they appear quite unconvincing."[137] When the broadest categories of science are considered, their validation cannot be achieved through scientific methods. At best, they are only analogies when applied to society or to the entire universe.[138] Likewise, every system of philosophy must employ a value-judgment, a faith-principle, which is not self-evident or self-justifying. An act of faith precedes the construction of any metaphysic or the acceptance of any philosophy of life.[139] In fact, reason is recovered only through belief in something. We must choose some key idea through which our partial perceptions of truth can be fitted into a satisfying world-view. Neither philosophy, religion nor science can achieve such a world-view without introducing a faith-principle which is not provided within the discipline itself. Polanyi concludes, "Every act of knowing has the structure of a commitment."[140] Belief is the source of all knowledge. No intelligence can function outside a framework in belief. Yet any attempt to specify our presuppositions "produces a set of axioms which cannot tell us why we should accept them."[141] Most of life is lived by faith, instinct, accumulated habit and hope. George Boas says, "The sphere of reason has a surface to which such directions are at most tangential."[142] The scientist is committed to a system of beliefs which cannot be accounted for either by experience or reason. Such an analysis of science does not mean that we are free to take or leave it, but that its presuppositions are subjective. It must rely on a faith-principle.[143] The ideas of scientific detachment or strict objectivism are to be rejected as absurd.[144] Ultimate convictions are expressed only from within a system of acceptances which are prior to any self-assertion or to the holding of any specific piece of knowledge.[145] It is logical, then, that objective experience cannot force or demand decision, though it may favor one interpretation of nature or life over others. Polanyi concludes,

---

[136] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 32.

[137] Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy (1st Harper Torchbook ed; New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 59.

[138] Richardson, op. cit., p. 34.

[139] Ibid., p. 36. This is one of the basic themes of Richardson's book. He labors this point and later applies it more specifically to the Christian faith.

---

[140] Polanyi, op. cit., p. 313. [141] Ibid., p. 267.

[142] Boas, op. cit., p. 127. [143] Polanyi, op. cit., p. 171.

[144] Ibid., pp. x, xiii and 18. [145] Ibid., p. 267.

"Decision can be found only by a process of arbitration in which alternative forms of mental satisfaction will be weighed in the balance.[146]

It is the height of objectivity to recognize the presence of the subjective. This element comes into play within any group or community of which an individual is a part. Community and group standards are generally accepted by those who are part of the group.[147] The scientist is subject to control by the body of opinion of his cultural community just as others are subject to the accepted orthodoxy of their groups. The established propositions of science are involved in the current premisses of science and influence decisions to accept or reject specific observations.[148] In other words, even the scientist's selection of evidence is determined in light of his heuristic expectations.[149] It is, in fact, the major function of the scientist to apply the rules of scientific enquiry, using his judgement as to which rules may apply to his observations.[150] The subjective element is always present and the faith-principle is always in the background. Also, this element may be observed in that when scientific theories do change, the facts change, since they are facts only in light of some model.

There is a duality of subject and object in all experience.[151]

---

[146] Polanyi, Science, Faith and Society, p. 28.

[147] Boas, op. cit., p. 89.

[148] Polanyi, op. cit., p. 11.

[149] Polanyi, Personal Knowledge, p. 30.

[150] Polanyi, Science, Faith and Society, pp. 14-15.

[151] James Ward, The Realm of Ends or Pluralism and Theism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 20.

Teilhard said, "We are inevitably the centre of perspective of our own observation."[152] In the process of interpretation their observations, scientists are beginning to recognize, he observed, that "object and subject marry and mutually transform each other in the act of knowledge; and from now on man willy-nilly finds his own image stamped on all he looks at."[153] Consequently, in the act of knowing, the person who is doing the knowing makes a personal contribution to what is being known. Thus, the void between subjectivity and objectivity is bridged.[154] It is this non-objectifiable entity of human personality which eludes scientific method.[155]

R. M. Hare argues that beliefs are based on subjective presuppositions, which he calls "bliks." These "bliks" are not arrived at logically and they cannot be disposed of by logical evidence.[156] A. N. Whitehead recognized this element at work in the sciences and called science an endeavor in which reason is based on faith.[157] Casserley suggests that this is also true of philosophy. He describes philosophy as an analogical art in which there is an attempt to discover a rational understanding of a faith-principle through the use of analogy derived from experience and focused in the faith-principle itself.[158] Likewise, this element is at work in religion. What actually causes a man to take the way of God and believe in Him is a direct apprehension of the Divine. Rational thought can only serve to support or weaken that to which he has already committed himself. One believes in God before he can say why.[159] In other words, for the Christian, faith precedes understanding or reason; religious experience precedes theology. Faith alone offers the clues by which the data of science and religion can be properly understood.[160] It is not opposed to reason, but complements it. It is as necessary to reason as light is to sight. From the Christian point of view, this is true because the entire man, including his reason, must be justified by faith. The Christian act of faith is always a subjective response to a revelation in which God has taken the initiative, and that revelation is always a mediated immediacy.[161]

---

[152] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 32. [153] Ibid.

[154] Polanyi, Personal Knowledge, pp. 17 and 312.

[155] Rust, "The Apologetic Task in the Modern Scene," p. 185.

[156] R. M. Hare, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, editors (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 100.

[157] A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 83.

Belief is a mental act. In order for something to be believed, it must be capable of falsification or verification.[162] Ian Crombie asserts that falsification of the Christian's faith in God is possible in principle rather than in practice.[163] One cannot assert that there is no God because he does not know what goes on within the personality of the believer; neither does he know what will happen in the hereafter. Consequently, faith in God, from the intellectual point of view, is a matter of betting one's life on the fact of God. If one's faith is confirmed either nor or in the future, then everything has turned out for the best. If his faith is falsified, then he has lost nothing in the process.

---

[158] J. L. Langmead Casserley, The Christian in Philosophy (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p. 193.

[159] Edwyn Bevan, Symbolism and Belief (The Fontana Library. London: Collins, 1962), p. 345.

[160] Richardson, op. cit., p. 230.

[161] Eric C. Rust, Towards a Theological Understanding of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 53.

[162] Polanyi, op. cit., p. 313.

[163] Ian Crombie, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, editors (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 124.

Teilhard tried to show that science is unconsciously pursuing the same object as religion--the discovery of God.[164] In approaching this task he used as his point of contact with unbelievers his "faith in the world." By so doing he sought ultimately to point out that the Christ of faith most logically ties together and meets the needs of a world in evolution. He recognized, as Bernard Williams, that the Christian must think in terms of conversion rather than proof. He knew that reason would never lead a man to a faith commitment, and that in the last analysis belief cannot argue with unbelief; it can only preach to it.[165]

Teilhard understood the importance of faith. His apologetic starting point was faith in the world. From this point, in How I Believe, he led his reader to faith in spirit, progressed to faith in immortality, and, finally, to faith in personality.[166] This progression composes the first part of this essay. In this section he defined faith as "any approval of our intelligence for a general perspective of the Universe."[167] He said, "to believe, is to bring about an intellectual synthesis."[168] Such a definition of faith is in keeping with the "psychologic plan" of this first section.[169] He later pointed out, however, that the solution to fundamental questions can only be sought in a faith beyond all experience.[170] Likewise, at the end of How I Believe, although affirming his faith in God, he gave his readers some insight into the nature of religious faith and the personal anxiety and anguish involved. He said:

---

[164] Teilhard de Chardin, "We Must Save Mankind," Cahier I, p. 55.

[165] Bernard Williams, "Tertullian's Paradox," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, editors (New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 208-211.

[166] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, pp. 9-31.

> Sure, more and more sure, that I have to go through existence as if at the termination of the Universe, Christ awaits me, still I do not feel any particular assurance of this. To believe is not to see. As much as any one, I think, I walk amidst the shadows of faith.[171]

This statement must be interpreted in light of his assertion in the foreword: "Today I believe, probably more than ever, in God."[172] He did not attempt to lead his readers to a definite, iron-clad proof of the validity of his Christian faith. This would be impossible. He was content to indicate that the Christian way of life fits into the evolutionary world-view of science, and then to point out the nature of his faith in God. His faith consisted of a faith beyond experience. He could not prove its validity beyond the possibility of falsification while still in this life, yet he would someday know for certain. Meanwhile, there were moments of anxiety when he traversed the shadows.

---

[167] Ibid., p. 9. [168] Ibid. [169] Ibid.

[170] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 70.

[171] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 47. [172] Ibid., p. 7.

Some interpreters have complained that Teilhard worked on the basis of pre-formulated ideas,[173] that he was swayed by his religious convictions,[174] that his assurance was derived from his belief as a Christian,[175] and that his phenomenology was a justification of what he believed all along.[176] It is undeniable that his whole approach and attitude were colored by the fact of his Christian faith. His religious convictions unquestionably swayed him. He often stated that in his scientific eschatology he was moving in the realm of probabilities; and when hypotheses had to be introduced, when choices had to be made, he exercised those options in keeping with his Christian faith. However, he introduced these hypotheses and made these choices without compromising his scientific integrity. He was never unscientific in following this path. His critics often speak as though it is possible to be absolutely objective, when in fact it is not. Teilhard was not entirely objective, but this is not to say that he was unscientific. He introduced his Christian options only where they were just as probable and reasonable as their opposites. He did not make a serious mistake at this point. He remained as scientific as any of his critics, while taking a path in keeping with his faith-principle. He attempted to be true to both the subjective and objective aspects, the inner and outer sides, of reality.

---

[173] Helmut de Terra, Memories of Teilhard de Chardin, trans. J. Maxwell Brownjohn (London: Collins, 1964), p. 121.

[174] Rabut, op. cit., p. 240.

[175] Ernan McMullin, "Teilhard as a Philosopher," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LV (December, 1964), p. 26.

[176] James P. Reilly, Jr., "A Student of the 'Phenomena'," The World of Teilhard, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 60.

His dialectic. Teilhard opposed any attitude on the part of a Christian which would issue in a spirit of withdrawal or isolation from the world.[177] He was convinced that the greatest danger for Christianity is the temptation to withdraw into itself. Any withdrawal of this nature would make Christianity cease to appear what it really is--the truth of life--"the long despaired-of answer to the question asked by every human life."[178]

There are at least four ways a Christian may elect to face the rival stars of God and the world, according to Teilhard. (1) He may "repress his taste for the tangible and force himself to centre his interest on purely religious objects only, trying to live in a world made divine by the exclusion of . . . worldly objects."[179] (2) He may "dismiss the evangelical counsels and decide to lead what seems to him a complete and human life."[180] (3) He may do what is most usual by giving up any attempt to understand, never belonging wholly to God or to things, resigned to leading a double life.[181] (4) He may attempt to see how "we can reconcile, and provide mutual nourishment for, the love of God and a healthy love of the world, a striving towards detachment and a striving towards development."[182] Teilhard chose the latter approach, convinced that this could be done without making the slightest concession to nature.[183]

---

[177] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, pp. 43, 50, and 51.

[178] de Lubac, op. cit., citing a lecture by Teilhard to a student group in 1940.

[179] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 20. [180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid., pp. 20-21. [182] Ibid., p. 21. [183] Ibid.

Faith in God and faith in the World became the twin peaks of his dialectic.[184] He knew that a love for God and a love for the World was quite possible,[185] and he assumed that some reasonable reconciliation must be made between the World and the detaching aspirations of Christianity. A reconciliation of faith in God and faith in the World, or man, is necessary to the further advancement of the Kingdom of God.[186] The travail of the modern apologist consists in:

> establishing that the two Faiths facing each other (Faith in God and Faith in Man), far from being opposed to each other, represent on the contrary the two essential components of a complete humano-Christian mystique. No really Christian faith lives if it does not attain and does not raise, in its ascensional movement, the totality of the human spiritual dynamism . . . And faith in Man is psychologically possible no longer, if the evolutive future of the World does not rejoin, in the transcendent, some fire of irreversible personalization. In summary, it is impossible to progress Above without moving Ahead,--nor to progress Ahead without diverting towards the Above.[187]

The principle and generative medium which will bring about a resultant movement between faith in God and faith in the World (respectively, the "Above" and the "Ahead") are found in the idea that "there is a progress, within us and around us, a continual heightening of consciousness in the Universe."[188] Georges Crespy succinctly states Teilhard's use of these two poles in his apologetic: "'Faith in God' is . . . the act by which Teilhard is going to discover in the theme of the Universal

---

[184] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 143.

[185] Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Christique," HU, pp. 154-155.

[186] Teilhard de Chardin, "Sur le valeur religieuse de la recherche," SC, p. 260.

[187] Ibid., p. 261. Original translation.

[188] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 78.

Christ the actual direction of the world in evolution."[189] Faith in the World is "the act by which he is going to assure himself that in Christ, the world finds a direction."[190]

Teilhard's faith in the World has been the subject of much criticism. Many of his critics isolate one outstanding passage from How I Believe as the primary object of their complaint. In this passage he said:

> If on account of some interior upsetting, I should lose successively my faith in Christ, my faith in a personal God, my faith in the Spirit, it seems to me I would invincibly continue to believe in the World. The World (the value, the infallibility and the goodness of the World), that is, in the final analysis, the first, last and only thing in which I believe. It is by this faith that I live. And it is to this faith that, at the moment of dying, above any possible doubt, I shall abandon myself.[191]

Any fair evaluation of this statement must be in light of his apologetic purpose. He used faith in the World as the point of contact with the unbeliever and the starting point of his apologetic. Some of his critics have hastily assumed a negative stance without considering the total thrust of his work.

Teilhard saw a spiritual evolution of the universe in which the transcendent personal God and the evolving universe enter into conjunction to lift humanity in a single tide--"The sense of Earth opening and flowering upwards in the sense of God, and the sense of God rooted and nourished from below in the sense of Earth."[192] He saw the supernaturalizing Christian "Upward" as being incorporated in the human "Forward," and "at the same time Faith in God, in the very degree in which it assimilates and sublimates within its own spirit the spirit of Faith in the World, regains all its power to attract and convert."[193] He noted that the progress of the World, particularly the human universe, neither takes place in competition with God nor squanders energies which should properly be devoted to him. He said:

---

[189] Crespy, op. cit., p. 20. [190] Ibid.

[191] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 11.

[192] Teilhard de Chardin, "On the Possible Basis of a Common Credo," Cahier I., p. 77.

> The greater man becomes, the more humanity becomes united, with consciousness of, and mastery of, its potentialities, the more beautiful creation will be, the more perfect adoration will become, and the more Christ will find, for mystical extensions, a body worthy of resurrection.[194]

Teilhard viewed the World as an immense movement of Spirit;[195] consequently, the World in which he believed must be interpreted in this light. It is a World in which the greatest consciousness has conquered entropy, a World in which the primacy of Spirit and the primacy of the Future are affirmed, and a World in which the Spirit is its indestructible portion.[196] It is a personal Universe,[197] a Universe of souls, of interpersonal relationships "in which the relation to God (Omega) . . . provides the foundation for all others."[198] As de Lubac says, it is a Universe "'loaded with the spoils of matter, the individual treasure of souls' which is endowed with a 'cosmic consistence' and, being organized around a 'supreme Centre, both lovable and loving' is thereby 'imperishable'."[199] The only World in which Teilhard believed is one which is charged with love in its evolution, "the Universe of souls united or destined to be united with God in Christ. It is the Universe . . . as revealed to him by his faith."[200]

---

[193] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," FM, p. 268.

[194] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 137.

[195] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 153, citing a letter from Teilhard to Leontine Zanta.

[196] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Esprit de la terre," EH, pp. 50-51.

[197] Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'un univers personnel," EH, pp. 67-114.

[198] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 152.

Using faith in the World as his point of contact with the unbeliever, Teilhard presupposes many things of which the unbeliever is unaware and which he would not accept. He then attempts to lead the unbeliever, logically, to see that his faith in the World presupposes a faith in Spirit, which, in turn, leads to a faith in a personal and personalizing God, and, finally, to faith in Christ, in whom God reveals himself. de Lubac defends Teilhard's starting point and suggests that everyone must ultimately admit that in some sense his religious faith is based on some faith in the world, if it is from the world that human intelligence commences its rise to God. This is true even though religious faith is not the result of that faith in the World and even though it is of a different order.[201]

His hyperphysics. Teilhard sought to link the objective with interior experience, with an apologetic aim in view.[202] It was his method to start with the simplest and most elementary objects of science and build, not a metaphysics, but a "hyperphysics." He said, "I mistrust metaphysics (in the customary sense of the term) because I feel it is a sort of geometry. But I am ready to recognize another kind of metaphysics, which would really be a hyper-physics--or a hyperbiology."[203] He called his approach a "hyperphysics," and said, "Look a little more closely and you will see that this 'hyperphysics' is still not a metaphysic."[204] We must understand "hyperphysics" in the sense of a science of nature, essentially biological.[205] Teilhard attempted to understand the whole phenomenon of nature, including the interior aspect of the phenomena. According to Chauchard, this means "accepting the data, not of philosophy, but of common reflection, and inquiring whether science confirms them and how it explains them."[206] Thus, Teilhard's phenomenology does not bury one in a cloud of concepts, but demands experimental progress. It stimulates investigation.

---

[199] _Ibid_. [200] _Ibid_., p. 156. [201] _Ibid_., p. 183.

[202] _Ibid_., p. vii.

Teilhard believed the time was right for his new approach. He sought to justify his adherence to this new type of physics, noting:

> For a century there has been a profound development in the idea of evolution--this idea being both 'universalized' to the point where it has become in every domain a mode of knowledge, and 'humanized', centered around Man, with the result that we are now forced to a physics much more complex than that of the relativists and Einsteinians.[207]

The physics in which we are "forced" in Teilhard's scientific phenomenology, defined by Chauchard as "a process of synthetic reflection aimed at describing and understanding the world by starting from a unification of the data of the various experimental sciences, which are the study of natural phenomena."[208] In order to take this approach, one must have a synthetic spirit. He must have seen that the purpose of science is not limited to an analysis of the various facets of reality.

---

[203] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 213, citing a letter from Teilhard dated April 29, 1934.

[204] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 30.

[205] Paul Chauchard, Man and Cosmos: Scientific Phenomenology in Teilhard de Chardin, trans. George Courtright (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 30.

[206] Ibid., p. 28.

[207] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 259, quoting a letter from Teilhard dated February 19, 1950.

Teilhard described his purpose as that of penetrating

> still further into spiritual and human questions by the use of the methods of science, substituting for the metaphysics of which we are dying an ultraphysics (the real _phusike_ of the Greeks, I imagine) where matter and spirit would be embraced in one single coherent and homogenous explanation of the world.[209]

It is apparent from this that Teilhard was, in a sense, a physicist in the Greek meaning of the word.[210] In this vein, Crespy has compared Aristotle's _physis_ with Teilhard's "physics." He notes that Aristotle's _physis_ may be defined as the "growth of the being in conforming with its being."[211] Aristotle has individual beings in mind, rather than Being as such; whereas, Teilhard has a global being, the World, in mind, and proposes that we study its "physis." Teilhard's "physics" takes into consideration the growth of the being, but "this growth is accomplished not according to what is given the Being, at the beginning (as with Aristotle), but according to what the Being is going to become at its end."[212] Thus, we do not have a knowledge of this "physics" in retrospection but by prospection, or, as Crespy says, "We only know it by retrospection because we envisage it prospectively."[213]

---

[208] Chauchard, _op. cit._, p. 22.

[209] Cuenot, _op. cit._, p. 213, quoting a letter from Teilhard dated October 11, 1936.

[210] For a further expansion of this thought see Grenet, _op. cit._, p. 110; Claude Tresmontant, _Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: His Thought_ (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1959).

[211] Georges Crespy, "Teilhard's Concerns and Questions," (Lecture delivered at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1965), p. 22. (Mimeographed)

Teilhard sought to bring together the viewpoints of the materialists and those who offered a spiritual interpretation of the universe. He was convinced that each saw only half the truth. He said:

> I am convinced that the two points of view require to be brought into union, and that they soon will unite in a kind of phenomenology or generalised physic in which the internal aspect of things as well as the external aspect of the world will be taken into account. Otherwise, so it seems to me, it is impossible to cover the totality of the cosmic phenomenon by one coherent explanation such as science must try to construct.[214]

He fully realized that his "phenomenology" was not of the same kind as that of Husserl or Merleau-Ponty. Yet he could find no other term which as adequately described a Weltanschauung, founded on the study of the development of the Phenomenon. He felt his claim to the term more valid than that of the traditional phenomenologists who ignore one of the most significant dimensions of the Phenomenon: "this consists not only in being perceived by an individual consciousness, but also in making it clear to that consciousness, at the same time, that it is included in a universal process of 'noogenesis'."[215] He could not understand how one could write entire books without touching on cosmogenesis and evolution and still call himself a "phenomenologist."

---

[212] Ibid. [213] Ibid., p. 23.

[214] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 53.

[215] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 256, citing Teilhard.

He said, "Really, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (and the other philosophers at the Sorbonne) are still living in a pre-Galilean universe."[216] Teilhard has been accused of not making enough effort to justify his use of the term, "phenomenology."[217] This criticism has some validity in light of the common understanding of the term. Considerable misunderstanding has been the result. Yet, in light of his intention, it is probable that his approach is better described by this terminology than that of those usually considered "phenomenologists."

Teilhard's apologetic purpose becomes evident in that he sought to push phenomenology, or hyperphysics, to its limit, and bring the unbeliever who wants to be logical to see that a consideration of the whole phenomenon compels him to consider the full nature of the human person as well as a personal God of love.[218] The view of God in which hyperphysics terminates is neither a metaphysical view, a distortion of the metaphysical God, nor a self-deception hiding a path to the metaphysical. Rather, through his hyperphysics, Teilhard saw the face of God revealed through his creation. His vision is a scientific one, reserved for the one who is able to see deeply enough.[219]

He sought to present

> not at all an _a priori_ geometric synthesis, from the definition of "being," but an experimental _law of recurrence_, verifiable within the field of phenomena, and capable of being extrapolated into the totality of Space and Time.

---

[216] Chauchard, _op_. _cit_., p. 30, citing Teilhard.

[217] Alois Guggenberger, "Teilhard de Chardin: End or Beginning?," _Philosophy Today_ VIII (Summer, 1964), 102.

[218] Chauchard, _op_. _cit_., p. 31. [219] _Ibid_.

> Not an abstract metaphysics,--but a realistic Ultraphysics of Union.[220]

His task was seen, then, not as constructing a metaphysics, but as building an ultraphysics which would harmoniously synthesize all the fruit of scientific experience. In the process he sought to confine himself to scientific facts and to discern the meaning and direction, if any, of evolution. In this, he developed a phenomenology which relied on science, not philosophy or religion. His phenomenology considered both the interior and exterior aspects of the phenomenon. He saw the world as a whole rising above the close-knit totality of its parts. He perceived a global reality which he considered more necessary and essential than the individual beings it embraces. His scientific phenomenology is, in the final analysis, the result of a synthesis of the sciences. This phenomenology would be destined to remain incomplete without a further synthesis with metaphysics. It is incomplete as far as an overall grasp of reality is concerned, but its coherence on the immanent level and its emergence are sufficient to substantiate certain common values which permit agreement on the urgency and value of the human task. His phenomenology lends itself with ease to the apologetic task.

The phenomenology which Teilhard expoused gave him a natural point of contact with the Marxist. Marxism develops a scientific conception of the world which accounts for everything in terms of the complexification of matter. It is a scientific phenomenology of matter which declares itself a metaphysical materialism.[221] It says that new qualities are the result of quantitative complexification. This phenomenological truth, nevertheless, does not prove that matter is a sufficient explanation of reality. It may be seen that Teilhard spoke the language of the Marxist. He was uniquely qualified to provide the Marxist's scientific phenomenology with a crowning metaphysics it so badly needs.

---

[220] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Centrologie," L'Activation de l'énergie (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963), pp. 105-106; hereafter abbreviated AE.

His language. The Christian apologist today faces the problem of revealing the nature of religious language and justifying the use of its imagery.[222] In order to do this, he must be aware of the poetic element in religion. The more accurate descriptions of reality are more poetic than analytical. George Boas concludes that "all thinking is communicated in metaphors and similies. . . . A literal statement . . . is a statement whose metaphorical character has been forgotten."[223] If we seek universals, we must realize that we can achieve them only through metaphor or myth. Myth is a step beyond metaphor in that it makes our ideas more concrete. An event which has been transformed into a myth keeps its temporal dimension, since myth is always in the form of a narrative. However, it gains emotive power and bare facts are clothes with the robes of art and religion. As Boas says, "Though it cannot be verified when recognized as a myth, it will always be called upon to round out a body of ideas, for any system of thought will sooner or later reach the point where 'ultimate' questions are raised."[224]

---

[221] Chauchard, op. cit., p. 45.

[222] Rust, "The Apologetic Task in the Modern Scene," p. 198.

[223] Boas, op. cit., p. 99.

Teilhard often spoke as a poet in order to get scientists and others to "see" that scientific methods and theories are incomplete.[225] This was his only feasible approach. The language of rhetoric and the insight of a poet were required in the attempt to use indirect persuasion, for he realized that reason and analytical thinking alone would never accomplish his apologetic task. He was willing to risk expressing himself poorly in order to achieve his goal, and many have misunderstood him in the process. Unfortunately, there is a general inability to understand the language of poetry; and Teilhard certainly deserves the title of poet, though he did not particularly seek it.[226]

Philosophy is always partially an attack, a venture beyond the limitations of speech.[227] The same is true of religion. Though Teilhard was not a philosopher, he met some of the difficulties faced by philosophers. He sometimes had difficulty expressing himself because he was developing a new approach; and since ha had only inadequate inherited categories at his disposal, he had to create his own. Some of his language is ambiguous. It is certainly understandable, in light of the difficulty of expressing the richness and originality of his thought. He was always aware of the problem.[228] It could hardly be avoided, for in communicating his ideas he sought to combine a figurative use of terms which ordinarily have a somewhat different meaning with the use of new terms for new concepts.

---

[224] _Ibid_., p. 129. [225] McMullin, _op_. _cit_., p. 25.

[226] Arthur J. Knodel, "A 'Gentile's' View," _The_ _World_ _of_ _Teilhard_, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 79.

[227] Casserley, _op_. _cit_., p. 66. [228] Leroy, _op_. _cit_., p. 41.

He expressed the need for opposition in order to clarify his ideas.[229] He was attempting to put the message of theology in understandable terms, and felt the necessity to use modern language in speaking about the supernatural. He observed that the supernatural is discussed within a group of thought forms which most modern people have left behind them. It is necessary to transpose it into a system which is intelligible and alive to us.[230] A major part of his effort was expended in this direction, and he was convinced that his thought could also be expressed in traditionalist terms.[231] He never attempted to change the traditional Christian message but he did seek to translate it into understandable terms. However, he sometimes shocked his audiences when, recognizing the presence of some unbelievers, he avoided the use of the term "God," speaking only of "Logos," or "Omega." He did use the name "God" in other situations, for God was a self-evident fact to him.

Casserley suggests there is no more inherent conflict between the languages of science and theology, or philosophy, than between English and French. Any conflict is primarily the result of a semantical difference.[232] It is true that in describing the divine immanence it is necessary to use language other than that of empirical science. The theologian opens himself to attack if he mixes theological and scientific statements.[233] However, Cognet's criticism that Teilhard confuses various compartments of knowledge seems unfounded.[234] Teilhard tried to see each level of reality as part of a whole. He kept their differences in mind and tried to develop a language for expressing their unity in relationship. His language was a language of analogy. This is necessarily true because any approach must be grounded in analogy. Theology must itself speak through analogy as it attempts to interpret the truth about the process of nature as God's continuous creation. In the process, it must always respect the qualitative discontinuity of the levels of reality. Murray notes that this is the reason Teilhard used such words as "pre-life," and "proto-consciousness," or "hyper-personal" and "super-humanity," respectively, when he looked down or up the scale.[235] Analogies are abundant in his language and he is aware of their danger. For example, for him, society is analogous to an organism. Concerned about any misinterpretation of this analogy, he wondered how it could be correctly applied. He said, "How are we to escape from metaphor without falling into the trap of establishing absurd and over-simplified parallels which would make of the human species no more than a kind of composite, living animal?"[236] Such an analogy may be misinterpreted in two directions, says Murray, "by ignoring the qualitative threshold between its two terms, or by rejecting the reality of their similarities."[237]

---

[229] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 216.

[230] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 120, citing a letter from Teilhard dated June 27, 1932.

[231] Ibid. [232] Casserley, op. cit., p. 100.

---

[233] Eric C. Rust, "The Holy Spirit, Nature, and Man," Review and Expositor, LXIII (Spring, 1966), 163.

[234] Raven, op. cit., p. 298. [235] Murray, op. cit., p. 170.

[236] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 156.

The purpose of scientific language is to produce precise, unambiguous statements about reality. The purpose of poetic language, on the contrary, is to communicate reality itself. It does this "by means of imagery, evocation, tone, and the ambiguity--or rather ambivalence--of paradox, of symbol."[238] Ultimately, poetry cuts deeper than prose, but one must listen on the right wave-length if he is to ever hear the message of poet, the musician, or the mystic. Teilhard was sensitive to the charge that he was "imaginative" or "poetic." He defended himself, saying:

> I simply ask those who would call my interpretation of the facts imaginative or poetic to show me (and I will then concur) a perspective which more completely and naturally integrates the extraordinary (and misunderstood) phenomenon of man in the framework of our biology and energetics.[239]

It has been stated that there will be no return to Christianity without a corresponding revival of the appreciation of poetry, and that the regeneration of the gospel will only follow the resurrection of its proper language.[240] The proper language of religion is poetry. In J. G. Hamann's view, all language was originally poetic. He called this historically developed vernacular of any people natural, or God-given, language.[241] Poetry is a revelation of God, a divinely given form of reality. All we know is given us through images, parables.[242] Language about God is poetic (symbolic and mythical) because God defies literal description. The myths and symbols of religious language express a reality which cannot be grasped by the conceptualizing intellect. Only the imagination can grasp such reality because it is able to "see."[243] Just as the biblical images relating to God and his relation to the world cannot be dispensed with without vitiating the revelation, so the poetic cannot be removed from religious language without removing the heart of the religious message.

---

[237] Murray, op. cit., p. 143.

[238] Simon Bartholomew, in Teilhard de Chardin, HU, p. 9.

[239] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," The Appearance of Man, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 210; hereafter abbreviated AM.

[240] Casserley, op. cit., p. 96.

The very assertion that "God exists" is grounded in a cosmic kind of disclosure similar to the personal disclosure which is the foundation of the assertion "I exist."[244] Therefore, it cannot be expected that language about God will generate statements capable of empirical verification.[245] The language of science and theology are diverse. In Ramsey's view, this is a happy situation, "*for in the Long run it enables theology to supply a fragmented science with that one cosmic map which remains the scientific ideal*."[246]

Karl Stern notes a movement of love in Teilhard's language. Using as an example Teilhard's term "Omega Point," he illustrates the semantic bridges which are part of his apologetic approach. He finds in this term a scientific connotation: "The symbol of Greek letter and 'point' suggests a graph--and at the same time an evident scriptural connotation. It is the language of love which creates these semantic bridges."[247]

---

[241] James C. O'Flaherty, *Unity and Language: A Study in the Philosophy of Johann Georg Hamann* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1952), p. 16.

[242] *Ibid*., pp. 12-13.

[243] Rust, *Towards a Theological Understanding of History*, p. 87.

[244] Ramsey, *op. cit*., p. 82. [245] *Ibid*. [246] *Ibid*., p. 79.

His method: a summary. For Teilhard, the great test of truth is coherence and productiveness.[248] In keeping with this principle, he assumed that "in the last analysis the best guarantee that a thing should happen is that it appears to us as vitally necessary."[249] Otherwise, we are faced with an absurd world; and Teilhard was not willing to accept this.

It was his method to start with observations and to stick to them. He sought to contemplate the universe as it is, rather than reacting religious beliefs with scientific knowledge.[250] He did not propose to assume the thing he sought to prove, but began with a clean sheet.

It is the Laplacean fallacy to attempt to explain the higher in terms of the lower. Teilhard avoided this error by reversing the approach, attempting to understand the lower through the higher. At this point his methodology is in harmony with thinkers like John Oman, who suggested that if freedom and transcendent values are real, they cannot be adequately dealt with by a method which begins with the lower, for it has already ruled out the values and meanings it seeks.[251] Teilhard attempted to understand evolution by studying man as his beginning point. To those who would criticize him for this approach, Teilhard distinguished between bad and good anthropocentrism. Bad anthropocentrism "transfers _without correction_ the properties of man" downward to that which is prehuman and pre-living.[252] He later adds, good anthropocentrism "is valid and not to be evaded," if we want to understand "a universe to which we belong."[253] Teilhard's approach is good anthropocentrism.

---

[247] Karl Stern, "Universum Dei," The World of Teilhard, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 47.

[248] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 227; "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 182; PM, p. 35. See also Richardson's defense of the coherence theory over the correspondence theory, op. cit., p. 147.

[249] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 234.

[250] J. P. Blanchard, Méthode et principes du Père Teilhard de Chardin (Paris: Éditions du Vieux Colombier, 1961), pp. 62-63.

In _How I Believe_, he stated that his method was "to verify, first to solidity of an initial inevitable faith. To verify, secondly the organic continuity of the successive stages traversed by the growth of this faith."[254] He proposed to his readers that his starting point was a "faith." Then, he entreated them to reflect on the implications of science and led them to the threshold of religious faith. He subsequently proposed to show that an authentic Christianity agrees more closely with science than other religions, because it is the only religion which takes matter seriously. He could accept no other apology for himself, and could not suggest a better one for others.

---

[251] John Oman, _The Natural and the Supernatural_ (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931).

[252] Henry de Lubac, _La Pensée religieuse du Père Teilhard de Chardin_ (Paris: Aubier, 1962), p. 212, citing a letter from Teilhard dated April 29, 1934.

[253] _Ibid_. [254] Teilhard de Chardin, _HB_, p. 10.

Teilhard's approach clearly distinguished between two sources of knowledge, the natural on the level of the phenomena, and the supernatural on the level of revelation. He continually tried to avoid the accusation that he sought to establish one epistemological line, beginning with a scientific knowledge of evolution and running to a philosophical hypothesis of a personal Omega, but his theological enquiry does not prolong this stream of thought. At this point, the sequence of thought is broken off and one is confronted with a totally different sequence drawn from the source of revelation. He placed his analysis of Christianity in The Phenomenon of Man at the end as an epilogue. In this way he attempted to show that Christianity is indeed a phenomenon in the world, but its elements are new and are neither inferred nor deducted from what has gone before.[255]

Not all people immediately appreciate supernatural views of the Incarnation. Accordingly, he sought to follow a rationale which is intelligible to the majority of unbelievers--the value of spirit, personality and God. He attempted to direct their thinking to a divine Meeting-point, to guide them to some expectation of revelation, to communicate a vision of the Universe that is open, rather than being impersonal and closed.

He found a series of adjustments necessary because he started with man, or the noosphere (the sphere of thought), as his key to understanding evolution. These adjustments are described in The

---

[255] Mooney, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

Phenomenon of Man:

> To make room for thought in the world, I have needed to 'interiorize' matter: to imagine an energetics of the mind; to conceive a noogenesis rising upstream against the flow of entropy; to provide evolution with a direction, a line of advance and critical points; and finally to make all things double back upon someone.[256]

In "La Pensée du Père Teilhard de Chardin, par lui-meme," a brief summary of his thought, he noted that in a first period his thought was expressed in a sort of phenomenology, or "physics," which became the basis for a second period, in which he sought to build an "apologetics"--which was subsequently complemented and crowned by a "mystics."[257] Such was the normal pattern of his thought.

His method is parallel to that of the classic apologists. He sought a rational basis; he proposed a faith; he established a coherence between the rational basis and the faith-hypothesis; he demonstrated the absurdity of opposing ideas. Throughout the development of his thought, he courageously relied on his initial vision, or intuition. His credo is outlined in How I Believe:

> I believe that the Universe is an Evolution
> I believe that the Evolution goes toward Spirit
> I believe that the Spirit achieves itself in the Personal
> I believe that the Personal Supreme is the Universal Christ.[258]

The points of this credo have been chosen as the basic outline of the analysis of his thought which follows and as the springboards for an interpretation of its development.

---

[256] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 290.

[257] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Pensée du Père Teilhard de Chardin, par lui-meme," Les Études philosophiques, (Octobre-Decembre, 1955), 580-581.

[258] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, printed on the unnumbered page preceding the title page.

V. AN EVALUATION

The problem of religion, from an apologetic point of view, is to attain empirical relevance. In order to achieve this goal, the apologist is often tempted to reconcile Christianity with incompatible positions.[259] Consequently, this leads many to question his intellectual integrity. Teilhard recognized this problem and noted that since he lived and spoke from within the Christian world, some might suspect him of trying to introduce an apologia by artifice.[260] However, he assured his readers that it was not the convinced believer but the naturalist within him who sought a hearing in The Phenomen of Man.[261]

Throughout his life he was able to re-orientate many different kinds of minds.[262] What made him successful, in intellectual terms, was his ability to view fairly most religious or philosophical attitudes and to face difficulties squarely. He was able "to start back at the beginning with the man who needed help, to share his doubts, search with him, and so ease for him the road to faith."[263]

In the modern world there is a need for an apologetic emphasis on immanence.[264] Teilhard filled that need, referring to his approach as an "apologetics of immanence."[265] His apologetic approach involves a series of progressively ascending acts of faith, and the method of immanence. He endeavored to reveal a God already present in the universe, a God whose face appears like a watermark within his creation. The supernatural was approached through the natural. Though his method was one of immanence, he was very much aware of the transcendence of God. He believed, however, that apologetics had tried to re-introduce God by force into a world where he has no place. In view of such an approach, the scientist feels no need of God. The solution lies in returning to biblical tradition, in which God is creator, and the absolutely other is not absolutely remote--in which God's transcendence is revealed in his immanence. Teilhard considered God the absolutely near to every man who is able to "see" into the depths of a translucent universe. God is hidden in the heart of matter. He felt that God must be presented to the profane world of science in its own language and in terms of his presence in the world. We must not attempt to force attention elsewhere, where there is no interest. Rather, a clearer vision of the world, the object of the scientist's efforts, must be compelled, so that his work may be more completely performed. This means working with the sacred--the reverse side of the profane. In order to have an effective apologetic, it is necessary to meet the demands of the scientist who requires "the certain knowledge that this transcendent God is hidden in immanence, that personal love is the secret of the world."[266] The real meaning of Teilhard 's work lies in presenting an immanence which reveals itself as transcendent. It is an approach which resacralizes the profane world by giving it its own sacred character. Though the sacred is viewed by some as a sort of transcendental magic, this view ultimately does violence to the world of things. Teilhard's approach of immanence gives life from within; thus, the sacred constitutes a part of things without ceasing to be transcendent. Consequently, the sacred becomes partially accessible to the unbeliever. Though his views of the divine are sometimes poorly received by traditionalists, they are important for modern apologetics.

---

[259] Casserley, op. cit., p. 143. [260] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 292.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Cuenot, op. cit., pp. 292-293; Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 159.

[263] Ibid., p. 384.

[264] Rust, "The Holy Spirit, Nature, and Man," p. 158.

---

[265] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 250.

[266] Chauchard, op. cit., p. 170.

Teilhard's work is an apologetic which serves the traditional faith, but it is more than that. He developed a scientific humanism which contains a healthy respect for tradition. His work does not always bring about conversion. For that we must rely on grace. Nevertheless, it does make possible a union of mankind around certain common values which are necessary for the building of a harmonious universe. It makes real toleration a possibility. It recognizes certain objective aspects of truth as accessible to all, hence, the importance and value of his work for atheist as well as believer.[267]

Teilhard thought in big terms; consequently, he placed a greater emphasis on mankind than on individual men. Many of his critics consider this a weakness. However, a proper interpretation of his work will always take into account his apologetic purpose. He said early in his career:

> In human effort, we have the very marrow of the universe. And it's there that we have to strike.--Don't you think that instead

---

[267] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

> of working directly on souls, it would often be better to concentrate on transforming their environment, that is on gaining acceptance for, on bringing to the man in the street, certain points of view, certain ideological currents, that would win over and lead towards God all who shared them, without there being any necessity to bring any external or other pressure on them?[268]

He sought always to broaden perspectives and enlarge ideas about man and the universe. To him, this was the direction in which Christianity naturally leads. He said:

> Let us never give the impression that we are afraid of something which may renew and enlarge our ideas of man and the universe. The world will never be vast enough, nor will humanity ever be strong enough to be worthy of Him who created them and incarnated Himself in them.[269]

He believed that what had spurred man into the exploration of nature was the ambition to live, rather than the fear of perishing. He participated in that ambition and sought to co-operate with human progress wherever possible. He found in faith in Christ a leavening for the natural activity of man.[270] Unceasingly, he sought an answer to the question of how all the positive values of civilization can be united in a whole which will heighten individual values, how to synthesize "the democratic sense of human rights, the communist vision of the potentialities contained in matter, and the Fascist ideal of an organized elite."[271] Consequently, his goal was closely identified with that of scientists and others who worked for the progress of mankind;

---

[268] Teilhard de Chardin MM, p. 142.

[269] Teilhard de Chardin, "What Should We Think of Transformism?," VP, p. 160.

[270] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 183.

[271] Teilhard de Chardin, "We Must Save Mankind," Cahier I, p. 53.

and his apologetic appealed to many of them.

Teilhard's faith in the world was initially more than just a recognition of reality. It involved an attachment to the world and a certain confidence in it, because of an appreciation of the goodness, or natural progress, of created being. He said, "Such a natural progress is necessary to explain the present state of the world, and I believe, to provide the foundation stone for our belief in God."[272] From this point, he proceeded to view things scientifically rather than metaphysically. His approach parallels in some ways that of the ancient "physicists" or "natural philosophers" such as Aristotle. Finally, his apologetic has existential overtones because his own personal witness becomes involved.

Faith and science are complementary, Teilhard believed.[273] He offered a method by which these two realms could be closely and dynamically linked, each informing the other. As Ramsey has said, "The personal and the scientific are locked together in the same situation, and there is no question of the scientific account being denied by the religious story, still less of its being likely to absorb it."[274] He believes, like Teilhard, that science and religion can be harmonized in a single vision, though each is characteristically different.[275] Einstein also noted that "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."[276] Teilhard would agree, and would say that the quest for knowledge springs from a religious need.

---

[272] de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning, p. 143, quoting Teilhard.

[273] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 212.

[274] Ramsey, op. cit., p. 76. [275] Ibid., p. ix.

A conciliator is often caught in a cross fire. Such was Teilhard's experience. He anticipated the criticism of scientists on the one hand and metaphysicians on the other.[277] In following his unique phenomenological method, he exposed himself to the misinterpretation that he had attempted to encompass all of reality by using only the special methods of paleontology.[278]

Teilhard recognized a cosmic focus in evolution. He accepted a law of complexity-consciousness, a confluence of human branches, the existence of an Omega Point at the peak of noogenesis, and a rebound of evolution based on the energy released by the meeting of the cosmic and the Christic. Therefore, one result of his apologetic was an appeal to biologists and anthropologists.[279] He also appealed to those who would not accept the views of St. Paul, but who saw Christian holiness as something of certain value.[280] To the pragmatist and naturalist who view flight from the world as a betrayal of man's fundamental responsibility, he made a strong appeal. Perhaps what has evoked the greatest response is his confidence in the value of man's involvement with matter.[281] This explains also his appeal to the Marxist. He sought also to show the positivists that the supernatural cannot be dismissed without destroying their own confidence in experience.[282]

---

[276] de Terra, _op_. _cit_., p. 132.

[277] Teilhard de Chardin, _LT_, p. 263.

[278] Rabut, _op_. _cit_., pp. 242-243; Guggenberger, _op_. _cit_., p. 102; McMullin, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

[279] Cuenot, _op_. _cit_., p. 375.

[280] Rabut, _op_. _cit_., p. 220.

[281] Robert J. Roth, "The Importance of Matter," _America_, CIX (December 21, 1963), 792.

In Teilhard we have possibly the first incidence of a Christian science in the sense that Aquinas' thought was a "Christian philosophy." He has shown that there is room for a Christian evolutionary philosophy, says McMullin,

> which takes advantage of the wealth of scientific results as the naturalist does and of the concepts and insights of phenomenology as the idealist does but claims to escape from the classic dilemma facing both naturalist and idealist--how to justify the leap from the limited 'given' to the cosmos as a whole.[283]

Teilhard's thought operated on three levels--(1) hyperphysics, (2) a psychological act of faith, (3) and faith in Christian revelation. He combined disciplined scientific thought, an original philosophic mind, and a mystical temperament. He has been called the most revolutionary thinker of the twentieth century.[284]

---

[282] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 78.

[283] McMullin, op. cit., p. 28. His name has often been linked with that of Aquinas, as in Mooney, op. cit., p. 200; de Lubac, op. cit., p. 143; Bernard Towers, Teilhard de Chardin (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1966), p. 45.

[284] Kopp, op. cit., p. 72.

CHAPTER III

THE WORLD AS AN EVOLUTION MOVING TOWARD SPIRIT

This chapter is developed along the lines of the first two points of Teilhard's credo: "I believe that the Universe is an Evolution. I believe that the Evolution goes toward Spirit."[1] The two remaining points of his credo are the underlying ideas in the following two chapters.

I. TRANSFORMISM

A definition of evolution. According to Teilhard, there are only two types of people, pluralists and monists, those who do not see and those who see.[2] Being convinced of evolution himself, he naturally believed everyone should be an evolutionist. Evolution, for him, was no longer an hypothesis. Rather, it has become "a _general condition_ (an additional dimension) which henceforth all hypotheses must satisfy."[3]

For Teilhard, transformism (or evolution) is "the vision simply of an organic universe, and more especially an organic world, whose parts are physically linked together both in their appearance and their destiny."[4] Actually, scientific transformism proves nothing for or against God. The decision as to whether the movement of evolution is intelligible, or requires a progressive and continuous creation accomplished by a prime mover, basically depends on one's metaphysics.[5] Modern evolutionary theory merely states that "in the spatio-temporal reality of the cosmos the great succeeds the less."[6] This idea is both indisputable and above condemnation. Teilhard reminded his readers, "A process is not a philosophical explanation."[7] Abbé Henri Breuil, a very close friend of Teilhard, stated concerning the principle of evolution that it

---

[1] Teilhard de Chardin, _HB_, unnumbered page preceding the title page.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 13.

[3] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," _AM_, p. 211, note 1.

> is nothing but the scientific method itself applied to all realities of all nature developing in time. It is the only means at our disposal of trying to discover the law of their expansion and order of succession, whatever their descriptive catalogue of things, but could not attempt to understand them.[8]

Teilhard would agree with this statement and add that evolution is more than a theory, a system or an hypothesis. It is the general condition which all theories, hypotheses, and systems must satisfy if they are to be thinkable and true. "Evolution is a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines must follow,"[9] he said. The discovery of evolution is what makes the world specifically modern, and the uncertainty of evolution's outcome is what disconcerts the modern world.[10]

---

[4] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 137.

[5] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformist Question," VP, p. 23.

[6] Teilhard de Chardin, "Evolution of the Idea of Evolution," VP. p. 245.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 247, editorial note quoting Henri Breuil, Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique, January 5, 1956.

For the Christian who is also a transformist, God's creative action is conceived "as a bringing to birth of the successive stages of His work in the heart of things,"[11] rather than as an intrusion of His works into the midst of pre-existent beings.

The movement of evolution. Teilhard believed what finally would divide modern man into two camps is an attitude of mind, the spirit of movement.[12] In his view, it is a matter of being or not being for mankind. He observed concerning the fixist position, "Immobility has never inspired anyone with enthusiasm!"[13] He believed that without doubt the universe is moving. His purpose in the essay, "A Note on Progress," was to emphasize this point.[14] In How I Believe he noted, "A first point which reveals itself to me with an evidence which I no longer attempt to contest, is that the unity of the World is of a dynamic or evolutive nature."[15] He observed that life is ceaseless discovery or movement.[16] He accepted without question that everything in the universe moves, but recognized the difficulty of some in accepting it when they observe certain phenomena of nature which appear fixed. The universe appears to be fixed, because the larger a thing is, the slower is its movement.[17] He suggested that "what we regard as the fixity of present organisms may be simply a state of very slow movement, or of rest between spells of movement."[18] He assured his readers that the universe has always been in motion and continues to be.[19]

---

[9] Teilhard de Chardin, FM, p. 219. [10] Ibid., p. 229.

[11] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformist Paradox," VP, p. 102, note 1.

[12] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Planetisation of Mankind," FM, p. 139.

[13] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 11.

[14] Ibid., p. 12. [15] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 16.

[16] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 72.

Men need a passionate longing to grow, to be. There is no place for sceptics, pessimists, immobilists, the poor in spirit, the sad, the weary.[20] The principle of evolution may be adapted to provide men with the spirit they need.

The idea of cosmogenesis is defined in Teilhard's words as: "an organic universe in which no element and no event can appear except by birth, i.e. in association with the development of the whole."[21] The universe has taken on the new dimension of organicity.[22] Everything is in a process of movement, of growth. But to recognize and accept that each new being must have a cosmic embryogenesis does not invalidate the reality of its historical birth.[23]

The growth process is one of directed chance. Said Teilhard, "It means pervading everything so as to try everything, and trying everything so as to find everything."[24] In this organic evolutionary process "everything is the sum of the past and . . . nothing is comprehensible except through its history."[25] Nature itself is the equivalent of becoming, of self-creation. This, said Teilhard, is the position to which experience leads us.[26] Matter is revealed to modern research as in a state of genesis, or becoming. Within this genesis two aspects of matter which are characteristic of it in its subsequent stages are distinguishable. First, there is the stage of granulation, which suddenly and only once in history gave birth to the components of the atom, as well as the atom itself. Second, there is the stage, from the initiation of the molecular level, of proceeding additively by a process of growing complexity.[27] Evolution strives to be more. It is a movement toward freedom. In this regard Teilhard said, "Nothing really exists in the Universe except myriads of more or less obscure spontaneities, the compressed swarm of which gradually forces the barrier separating it from liberty."[28] There is a determinism which appears at both ends of the process of cosmic evolution. The two forms are antithetical. At its lower end the process is forced toward the most probable, for lack of freedom; and at its upper end, it ascends to the improbable through the triumph of freedom.[29]

---

[17] Ibid., p. 62.

[18] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 13.

[19] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 229.

[20] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 72.

[21] Cuenot, op. cit., pp. 291-292, quoting Teilhard.

[22] Ibid., p. 292. [23] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 78.

---

[24] Ibid., p. 110.

[25] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 12.

[26] Ibid., p. 13. [27] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 49.

[28] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 72.

[29] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 183.

The meaning of evolution. Is the universe dispersing itself in sparks or is it tending to concentrate in one center of light? Does it tend toward plurality or unity? For Teilhard, the ultimate choice by which mankind must be divided is that between pluralism and monism.[30] He believed we are forced to treat the Universe as if it were one. He said:

> But is it necessary to speak of force in these questions? and the presence of the Whole in the World, does it not impose itself upon us with the direct evidence of a certain light ? In truth I believe so. And it is precisely the value of this primary intuition which seems to me to support the entire edifice of my belief.[31]

His sense of compulsion to view the universe as one is supported by the study of Thorpe, who observes that it appears to him that over recent years new and more impressive evidence for the unity of the cosmos has been revealed by biology.[32]

Teilhard considered, then, that structurally, the universe forms a whole.[33] He observed that in every field modern man is beginning to live in the presence of and with the thought of the Whole.[34] In fact, the meaning of evolution is bound to this concept. He concluded, "Everything in the world appears and exists as a function of the whole.

---

[30] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 45.

[31] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 14. [32] Thorpe, op. cit., p. 89.

[33] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 43; HB, p. 12; DM, p. 30: ". . . Then we must also recognise that in the whole process which from first to last activates and directs the elements of the universe, everything forms a single whole."

[34] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 66.

This is the broadest, deepest and most unassailable meaning of the idea of Evolution."[35]

Any organism is reducible to its component parts. However, it does not follow that the sum of the parts is equal to the whole. That what is free can be broken down into determinism does not disprove the possibility that the world is based on freedom. It is only the result of the triumph of ingenuity on the part of life. Indeed, the world is based on freedom.[36] In a whole, there are always properties which result from the collective play of the parts; but there are also certain other properties which belong to the collectivity as such. These properties can never be accounted for either by analysis or the sum of the parts. If the world is ever really explained, these properties, which are the attributes of natural wholes larger than those to which we ordinarily confine our studies, must be given a greater part of our attention.[37]

Considering the individual unit in relation to the whole, Teilhard observed:

> On the one hand the individual unit is lost in number, on the other it is torn apart in the collectivity, and in yet a third direction it stretches out in becoming. This dramatic and perpetual opposition between the one born of the many and the many constantly being born of the one runs right through evolution.[38]

---

[35] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 214.

[36] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 110-111.

[37] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformist Paradox," VP, p. 98. For further comment see also F. G. Elliot, "The World Vision of Teilhard de Chardin," The Teilhard Review, I (Summer, 1966), 9-10; Robert J. O'Connell, "Teilhard's Synthesis: Some Criteria for Criticism," Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964 (New York: Fordham University, n.d.), p. 16.

[38] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 111.

He noted that "partially, infinitesimally, without losing any of its individual value, each element is co-extensive with history, with the reality of the whole."[39] The universe is an organic whole of which individual units are a part. On one hand the stuff of the universe disperses and radiates "outwardly from ourselves, without limit, spatially from the Immense to the Infinitesimal and temporarily from the abyss of the past to the abyss of the future."[40] Conversely, "in this endless and indivisible network, everything has a particular position defined by the development (free or predetermined) of the entire system of movement."[41]

Many contemporary philosophers are concluding that the act of knowing has two sides. On the one hand, there is an apprehension of wholes intuited through empirically observable parts. On the other hand, there is an analytic knowledge of the parts individually observed. As Rust says, "It is this intuitive awareness of living and personal wholes which drives science on to an investigation of the parts. In other words the intuitive awareness partakes of feeling and provides a lure to investigate."[42] Teilhard sought to point out that as long as science concentrates on the analysis of the parts, neglecting a consideration of the whole, it will be led along the road of mechanism and will never be able to understand vital and personal being.

---

[39] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 129.

[40] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 85.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Rust, "The Holy Spirit, Nature, and Man," op. cit., p. 165.

Teilhard's emphasis on wholes has something in common with the position of J. C. Smuts. Smuts contended that evolution produces natural wholes which we call bodies or organisms. The tendency toward wholeness is found throughout both inorganic and organic nature. "Holism" is the term coined to designate this fundamental factor operative towards the making or creation of wholes in the universe. Contrary to Teilhard, while Smuts's emphasis on Holism is constructive, his philosophy is a naturalistic pantheism; and holism is his God.[43]

The new concept of time. According to Teilhard, the psychology of modern anxiety is linked with the abrupt confrontation with space-time.[44] What makes a modern man is the capability of seeing in terms of space, time and duration. By duration, he means biological space-time. The truly modern man is incapable of seeing things (even himself) otherwise. Many contemporary men are not yet modern in this sense.[45]

Time acts on space and incorporates it within itself. Time and space together composes a single progression, said Teilhard, "in which Space represents a momentary section of the flow which is endowed with depth and coherence by Time."[46] The two are organically joined together so as to weave the stuff of the universe.[47] The change brought about in man's experience by the appearance of space-time is seen in that everything that was previously considered as points in our cosmological constructions have become instantaneous sections of indefinite temporal fibres.[48] Teilhard defined time as "the rise of the Universe into those high latitudes where complexity, concentration, centration and consciousness grow and increase, simultaneously and correlatively.[49] For him, time is the vector along which the world is organized.

---

[43] J. C. Smuts, Holism and Evolution (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926).

[44] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 227. [45] Ibid., p. 219.

[46] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 84.

[47] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 218.

Every component part of the world has emerged from what preceded it. Consequently, he said, "Every particle of reality, instead of constituting an approximate point in itself, extends from the previous fragment to the next in an indivisible thread running back into infinity."[50] He noted also that "the threads or chains of elements thus formed are not homogeneous over their extent."[51] They represent "a naturally ordered series in which the links can no more be exchanged than can the successive states of infancy, adolesence, maturity and senility in our own lives."[52] He noted finally that "no elemental thread in the Universe is wholly independent in its growth of its neighbouring threads."[53]

Teilhard believed that more and more men are beginning to reason, act, and pray in terms of space-time in its limitless and organic dimensions. Though these men may seem isolated, they recognize one another; and they know that in the future the world will see as they see and think as they think.[54]

If one were to graphically illustrate space-time, it could best be done in terms of a cone, because "Caught within its curve the layers of Matter (considered as separate elements no less than as a whole) tighten and converge in Thought, by synthesis."[55] The point of the cone is the Omega Point, which Teilhard equated with the Christ; and in his view our universe can be completely known and understood only from the point of view of God, where all the lines of the universe converge. In light of his view of the world as an evolution moving toward spirit, we must discard the three-storied universe. We must also recast into a dynamic framework such traditional concepts as the nature of man, the Church, the relation of body and soul, God to the world, and good to evil. All these tasks are the result of this "new Copernican Revolution."

---

[48] Ibid., p. 47.

[49] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 88.

[50] Ibid., p. 84. [51] Ibid. [52] Ibid. [53] Ibid. [54] Ibid., p. 96.

The process of evolution. Teilhard concluded that in every field the beginnings are forever lost. They are swallowed up by the past and we are no longer able to decipher them.[56] He noted the successive stages of evolution:

> During a first and immensely long period (pre-life) chance alone, so far as we can judge, seems to have governed the formation of the first complexes. Above this (pre-human life) there stretches a wide, disputed, area in which, according to some (the neo-Darwinians), the weaving of the biosphere is again to be explained by chance alone (automatically selected chances); according to others (the neo-Lamarckians) still by chance, but in this case chance seized and used by a principle of internal self-organisation. Higher still (once the threshold of reflection has been crossed) the psychic power of combination finally emerges in the individual among the effects of large numbers as a specific and normal factor of hominised life. At this point, some would maintain, that the biological genesis of invention finally comes to a halt.

---

[55] Ibid., p. 88.

[56] Teilhard de Chardin, Man's Place in Nature, trans. René Hague (London: William Collins Sons & Co., 1960), p. 38; hereafter abbreviated MPN.

> Surely, however, it is abundantly evident . . . that the cycle is not finished: it is tending, on the contrary, to prolong itself (or rather culminate) in a further terminal state. After 'individual' invention, which is the fruit of a tentative search carried out in isolation, we have collective invention, born of totalised research.
>
> And thus we find at the same time that we have reached the heart of our problem. For once we have accepted the relationship noted above between planetary compression, release of free human energy and, finally, the rise of research, we must ultimately reach this conclusion: that a mankind subjected to a compressive socialisation is synonymous with a mankind braced together in an effort to discover. And what does it seek to discover if not, ultimately, the means to super- or at least ultra-hominise itself?[57]

The evolutionary process has proceeded from the atom, to the molecule, to the protein, to life, to man.[58]

The birth of the earth came about some billions of years ago. It appears that this event came about, not as the result of a regular process of astral evolution, but through some improbable accident. This accident may have been related to a brush with another star or some internal unheaval. In the process, a fragment of matter which contained particularly stable atoms broke away from the surface of the sun and began to condense and take shape, or roll itself up. This fragment of matter contained within it the future of man.[59]

In the universe's evolution there is a law of irreversibility. This law applies wherever there is heredity. Any being retains traces of every phase through which it comes. Therefore, it is incapable of returning exactly to any of the phases through which it has progressed.[60]

---

[57] Ibid., pp. 108-109. [58] Ibid., pp. 28-30.

[59] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 67.

[60] Teilhard de Chardin, "On the Law of Irreversibility in Evolution," VP, p. 49.

Properly understood, this law appears to survive all the objections which have been levelled against it. On the level of man, said Teilhard, "It is through human consciousness, genetically linked to a heavenly body whose days are ultimately numbered, that Evolution proclaims its challenge: either it must be irreversible, or it need not go on at all!"[61]

Teilhard observed and accepted discontinuities in nature. However, he noted, "Discontinuity does not mean a break."[62] He said:

> Let us consider, for example, a cone, and in this cone let us follow the gradual diminution of its regular traverse sections in the course of a continuous movement from the base to the summit. Nothing is so different from a point as a surface. And yet, from the direction of movement chosen by us and from the properties of the cone, we discover that a given progression along the axis of the solid, having for a time led only to a reduction in the surface areas found without modification in their nature, will at a given moment make a surface yield to a point. The cone will have produced its peak. A new order of realities is discovered and established by evolution.[63]

He observed that in order to explain the genesis of the world some would make it a choice between the two opposite poles of complete stability and continuous change. He rejected both choices and projected a third which he felt more in keeping with observable facts. He introduced the idea of single points, critical points, thresholds, or changes of state. He said, "Let us admit . . . that in the structure of the terrestrial are not only classes, branches, kingdoms, but that one must see in it spheres, also, of which we are the last to arrive."[64] He suggested that life was understood by modern science as a fluid continuity. However, it now resolves itself into independent and discontinuous terms. He called this the "transformist paradox."[65] He asserted:

---

[61] Teilhard de Chardin, "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 121.

[62] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 64.

[63] Ibid. [64] Ibid., p. 65.

> In every domain, when anything exceeds a certain measurement, it suddenly changes its aspect, condition or nature. The curve doubles back, the surface contracts to a point, the solid disintegrates, the liquid boils, the germ cell divides, intuition suddenly bursts on the piled up facts. . . . Critical points have been reached, rungs on the ladder, involving a change of state--jumps of all sorts in the course of development. Henceforward this is the only way in which science can speak of a 'first instant'. But it is none the less a true way.[66]

He noted that it is possible for science to become so enamoured by the continuity of the curve of evolution that it will neglect the regions of discontinuity. He continued:

> Pushed to a certain degree of convergence, the surfaces of a cone fuse at a point of no magnitude. Raised to a certain temperature or submitted to a certain pressure, bodies change state; they liquefy or vaporize. There are everywhere 'critical' or 'singular' points in the movement of matter. Why should there not be some such points in the transformations of life?[67]

Considering these critical points, or thresholds, he felt that no material vestige of the emergence of the microscopic from the molecular, the organic from the chemical, or the living from the pre-living would ever be found, that is, unless scientists become capable of reconstructing these processes in the laboratory.[68]

---

[65] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformist Paradox," VP, p. 82.

[66] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 78.

[67] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in Nature," VP, pp. 179-180. Owen W. Garrigan, "Chemical Evolution," Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964 (New York: Fordham University, n.d.), p. 37, attempts to undercut, from the viewpoint of a chemist, the idea of "leaps" in evolution, saying, "From hydrogen gas to evolving life is a stepwise progression. . . . The 'leaps' involved seem to be no more discontinuous than the leap in any chemical reaction, like the leap from iron to rust, the simple oxidation of iron to iron oxide. It seems to be a case of prosaic common sense: in any change which is not a substitution, something remains the same and something becomes different. The whole process of chemical evolution seems to be made up of such minute discontinuities in one enormous continuous process." Garrigan's observations here do not seem to undercut Teilhard's position. The primary difference in their positions is brought about as the result of their different perspectives--Garrigan is a chemist and Teilhard is a geologist and paleontologist. Garrigan tends to analyze parts; Teilhard views the whole.

The critical point of consciousness has passed and now evolution is conscious of itself. A vast evolutionary process continues around man and it is situated within the sphere of consciousness and collective consciousness.[69] Evolution is now at work in the psychic zones of the world and is transferring the cosmic stuff and also the cosmic "primacy" to the spiritual constructions of life.[70] Evolution is moving toward spirit.

II. COMPLEXITY/CONSCIOUSNESS

The "within" versus the "without" of things. The uniqueness of *The Phenomenon of Man*, indeed Teilhard's entire approach, lies in its view of things according to the law of complexity/consciousness.[71] Basically, Teilhard observed in nature that the higher the degree of complexity, the higher the degree of consciousness.[72]

From its inception, modern science has developed along the lines of entropy, assuming the wearing down and disintegration of the universe.

---

[68] Teilhard de Chardin, *PM*, p. 79.

[69] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," *FM*, p. 15.

[70] Teilhard de Chardin, *PM*, pp. 220-221.

[71] *Ibid*., p. 301; Cyril Vollert, "Toward Omega: The Vision of Man," *Theology Digest*, VIII (1960), 134, says, "Teilhard's originality is found in his contention that terrestrial substances possess the property of becoming more vitalized as they become more complex."

[72] Teilhard de Chardin, "Life and the Planets," *FM*, p. 111.

Teilhard suggested:

> It should now be time to recognise that 'transversally' . . . to an irresistible relaxation of universal energy and, conjointly with this relaxation, a second and no less irresistible current exists, forcing this same energy, as it relaxes, to make a long circuit into the increasingly complex, that is to say, at the same time, into the increasingly conscious.[73]

In keeping with the law of complexity/consciousness which he observed, he posited that in every corpuscle of nature there are two levels of operation. The first level, the tangential, binds the corpuscle to all others in the universe by way of complexity. The second, the radial or the axial, leads from consciousness to consciousness; and on the human level it manifests itself in the psychological phenomena of unanimity and co-reflexion.[74] He summed up The Phenomenon of Man in these words:

> If the universe, regarded sidereally, is in process of spatial expansion (from the infinitesimal to the immense), in the same way and still more clearly it presents itself to us, physicochemically, as in process of organic involution upon itself (from the extremely simple to the extremely complex)--and, moreover, this particular involution 'of complexity' is

---

[73] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 215. In his "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 139, he stated the law of complexity/consciousness as follows: "'Left long enough to itself, under the prolonged and universal play of chance, matter manifests the property of arranging itself in more and more complex groupings, and at the same time in ever-deepening layers of consciousness; this double and combined movement of physical unfolding and psychic interiorisation (or centration) once started, continuing, accelerating and growing to its utmost extent.'"

[74] Ibid., p. 265. Ibid., note 1, he distinguished two types of energy: "The first primary (psychical or radial energy) escaping from entropy; and the other secondary (physical or tangential energy) obeying the laws of thermo-dynamics: these two energies not being directly transformable into one another, but interdependent on one another in their functioning and evolution (the radial increasing with the arrangement of the tangential, and the tangential only arranging itself when prompted by the radial)."

> experimentally bound up with a correlative increase in interiorisation, that is to say in psyche or consciousness.[75]

Teilhard saw this as the greatest discovery made in the twentieth century.[76]

Parallel with the phenomenon of corpuscular disintegration is that of increasing complexity, each stage being accompanied by a more advanced form of spontaneity and spiritual energy.[77] Entropy is being counterbalanced by a growth of the psychic. The "radial" may be found beneath the "tangential". Consistent with this idea, he reasoned, "The impetus of the world . . . can only have its ultimate source in some _inner_ principle, which alone could explain its irreversible advance towards higher psychisms."[78]

How can life take into account determinism on the "without", yet act in freedom "within"? Perhaps, he pondered, we shall more completely understand in the future. As far as he could observe, life as a whole appears as an advance into improbability and also as a continuing ascent towards greater consciousness.[79] He viewed the whole and sought to consider both the inner and outer sides of reality.[80] There is an interdependence of energy between the within and the without of things. He speculated that this interdependence can "only be expressed by a complex symbolism in which terms of a different order are employed."[81] Experimentally, the two terms, complexity and consciousness, are inseparable.[82] The degree of consciousness of the different constituent elements of the universe will vary according to the place of that element in the scale of complexities.[83]

---

[75] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 301.

[76] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," _FM_, p. 66. He expanded this idea, saying, "The greatest discovery made in this century is probably the realisation that the passage of Time may best be measured by the gradual gathering of Matter in superposed groups, of which the arrangement, even richer and more centralised, radiates outwards from an ever more luminous fringe of liberty and interiority. The phenomenon of growing consciousness on earth . . . is directly due to the increasingly advanced organisation of more and more complicated elements, successively created by the working of chemistry and of Life. At the present time I can see no more satisfactory solution of the enigma presented to us by the physical progress of the Universe."

[77] _Ibid_., p. 78.

[78] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 149.

Teilhard assumed that all energy is fundamentally psychic in nature. He made this assumption to avoid a basic dualism, which he considered both impossible and anti-scientific, and "to safeguard the natural complexity of the stuff of the universe."[84] He added:

---

[79] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Movements of Life," VP, p. 150.

[80] R. C. Zaehner, Matter and Spirit: Their Convergence in Eastern Religions, Marx, and Teilhard de Chardin (Religious Perspectives, Vol. VIII, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen. New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 154, notes that the West has historically emphasized the "without" of things and the East has emphasized the "within" of things.

[81] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 64.

[82] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 174: "Complexification due to the growth of consciousness, or consciousness the outcome of complexity. . . ." See also PM, p. 61, where he says, "Spiritual perfection (or conscious 'centreity') and material synthesis (or complexity) are but the two aspects or connected parts of one and the same phenomenon." He expanded this idea (Ibid., note 1), suggesting, "On the phenomenal plane, each being is constructed like an ellipse on two conjugate foci: a focus of material organisation and a focus of psychic centering—the two foci varying solidarily and in the same sense."

[83] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Planetisation of Mankind," FM, p. 130.

[84] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 64.

> In each particular element this fundamental energy is divided into two distinct components: a tangential energy which links the element with all others of the same order (that is to say, of the same complexity and the same centricity) as itself in the universe; and a radical energy which draws it towards ever greater complexity and centricity--in other words forwards.[85]

The co-efficient which expresses empirically the link between the tangential and the radial energies of the universe in the process of their respective developments is that of "arrangement", whose subsequent advances are accompanied by a parallel expansion and deepening of consciousness.[86] Once this law of complexity/consciousness, or the law of recurrence, has been accepted, said Teilhard, "nothing can arrest the logical sequence in which two worlds which we were accustomed to regard as being completely separate are seen to approach and complement each other."[87]

Thorpe, himself a noted biologist, enthusiastically approves this law of complexity/consciousness.[88] He recalls A. N. Whitehead's acceptance of a similar view which considered the universe as physically wasting, on the one side, and spiritually ascending, on the other.[89] Rust adds his approval, preferring the view that "what is potential in energy becomes actual when certain levels of organization or structural relationship are attained."[90]

---

[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65. [86] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[87] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Planetisation of Mankind," *FM*, p. 131.

[88] Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 17, citing A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927).

[90] Rust, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

The law of complexification. Both consciousness and freedom are functions of infinite complexity.[91] The basic discovery that all entities in the universe owe their appearance to arrangements "of a single initial corpuscular type is the beacon that lights the history of the universe to our eyes."[92] From its inception, matter has obeyed this law of complexification.[93] In the past, the world has often been conceived as constructed of two infinities, the infinitestimal and the immense. However, there is also a third infinity, the immensely complicated.[94] Teilhard assumed, and considered it just as "scientific" as other assumptions that may be made, that the universe is folding in upon itself and being interiorized in a growing complexity.[95] Within the universal process there is, without doubt, he said, "a constant perennial current of 'interiorising complexification' that animates the whole mass of things."[96] He assumed that the degree of complexity may be used as a guide to understanding the truth of the world and to evaluate the relative importance and place of all things.[97] The rise toward complexity (toward the improbable) he calls a "second form of gravity," or a "gravity of complexity."[98] In a lecture of 1942 he defined and interpreted what he meant by the term "complexity":

---

[91] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in Nature," VP, pp. 224-225.

[92] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 48.

[93] Teilhard notes the phases in the cosmic rise to complexity in his essay, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 217: "We may seek to distinguish the phases or pulsations of the cosmic rise into complexity (that is to say, into the Improbable) as follows:
a The pre-atomic phase: formation of nuclei and electrons;
b The atomic phase: grouping of nuclei in atoms (fixed and limited number of free 'compartments');
c The molecular phase: grouping of atoms in finite or indefinite chains;
d The Cellular phase: grouping of molecules in centrated clusters.
In all these cases, up to but excluding Man, the arrangement seems to have been brought about mainly by the working of chance and probing; but in phases a to c the majority of the groups (except in the case of very large molecules) represent knots of stability, whereas in phase d the arrangements that survive represent privileged centres of activity."

[94] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 23. [95] Ibid., p. 32.

[96] Ibid., p. 33.

> First of all, what do I mean by the word 'complexity'? By the complexity of a grouping, I do not mean only the number and variety of the elements forming that group. I am thinking more of their arrangement. . . . As I understand it here, complexity is an organized, and consequently centered heterogeneity. In this sense a planet is heterogeneous, but not complex. Two different factors or terms are therefore necessary to denote the complexity of a system; one expresses the number of elements or groups of elements contained in the system; the other, much more difficult to represent, expresses the number, variety and closeness of the links (density) existing between these elements at a minimum volume.[99]

---

[97] Teilhard de Chardin, "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 107.

[98] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 214.

[99] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 222. In MPN, p. 20, he said, "I shall strictly confine my use of the word to the meaning of combination, i.e. that particular higher form of grouping whose property it is to knit together upon themselves a certain fixed number--whether great or small matters little--of elements, with or without the secondary addition or aggregation or repetition--within a closed whole of determined radius: such as the atom, the molecule, the cell, the metazoon, etc.

A fixed number of elements, a closed whole: this twofold characteristic of complexity must be emphasized, for on it depends the whole course of the thesis developed here." In his "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 105, he said by way of definition, "We will define the 'complexity' of a thing . . . as the quality the thing possesses of being composed--

a of a larger number of elements, which are
b more tightly organized among themselves.

In this sense an atom is more complex than an electron, a molecule more complex than an atom, and a living cell more complex than the highest chemical nuclei of which it is composed, the difference depending (on this I insist) not only on the number and diversity of the elements included in each case, but at least as much on the number and correlative variety of the links formed between these elements."

The number of links or connections is most important in this view of complexity. This is seen throughout the process of complexification and particularly in the process of cephalization.

The drive toward consciousness. At present, said Teilhard, the science of man is little more than a branch of humanism furnished with technical terms. One condition must be met in order to escape the humanists: "the final establishment of a relationship of an energizing nature prevailing all along the line, between physics and the human phenomenon."[100] He sought to meet this condition by assuring all that matter and consciousness are bound together. Consciousness is organically and physically based in the same universal process with which physics deals.[101] Modern science has customarily viewed only the without of things. Contrary to appearances currently admitted by physics, the stability of the process of nature is at the top, or end, of the process in the ultra-synthetic sphere, rather than in the infra-elementary sphere.[102] The world continues to dissipate itself by chance into matter through its tangential envelope; but by its radial nucleus it gravitates against the tide of probability (gravity of complexity) towards a divine focus of mind which attracts it onward. There is something in the cosmos which increasingly escapes entropy.[103] Teilhard asserted:

> It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an 'interior' appears at the heart of beings, as it was seen through a rent. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree

---

[100] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization and Speciation," VP, p. 256.

[101] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 227.

[102] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 271.

[103] Ibid.

> or another, this 'interior' should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself, there is necessarily _a double aspect to its structure_, that is to say in every region of space and time--in the same way, for instance, as it is granular: _co-extensive with their Without, there is a Within to things_.[104]

In this statement can be seen his methodology of understanding the lower through the higher, of seeking to understand man and then extrapolating into the past.

Even in the most nascent forms of matter there is a within of things. However, he said, it "must not be thought of as forming a continuous film, but as assuming the same granulation as matter itself."[105] The property of atomicity is common to both the within and the without of things.[106] The growth of the within takes place because of a double related involution, "the coiling up of the molecule upon itself and the coiling up of the planet upon itself."[107]

In order to write an adequate natural history of the world, it would be necessary to follow it from within. He concluded:

> It would thus appear no longer as an innerlocking succession of structural types replacing one another, but as an ascension of inner sap spreading out in a forest of consolidated instincts. Right at its base, the living world is constituted by consciousness clothed in flesh and bone. From the biosphere to the species is nothing but an immense ramification of psychism seeking for itself through different forms.[108]

Chauchard defends Teilhard against the charge of being an animist, and accepts his within of things as a scientific conclusion.[109] Teilhard supported his own position by quoting J. B. S. Haldane, a scientist of significant reputation, who suggested that evidence of life or mind will ultimately be found by science through all the universe, even in so-called inert matter.[110] However, there are those who still doubt and question Teilhard's position.[111]

---

[104] _Ibid_., p. 56. [105] _Ibid_., p. 58. [106] _Ibid_., p. 59.

[107] _Ibid_., p. 73. [108] _Ibid_., p. 151.

[109] Chauchard, _op_. _cit_., pp. 80-81.

A continual heightening of consciousness is taking place in the universe.[112] When one really takes a close look at nature, a continuous effort towards light and consciousness can be seen.[113] Teilhard defined consciousness as indicating "every kind of psychism, from the most rudimentary forms of interior perception imaginable to the human phenomenon of reflective thought."[114] For him, inert matter does not exist.[115] Every element contains to some degree an inwardness, spontaneity or consciousness. He suggested, "In a coherent perspective of the world: life inevitably assumes a 'pre-life' for as far back before it as the eye can see."[116] A certain quantity of elementary consciousness was originally contained in the matter of the earth.[117] Scientists have habitually considered the tangential energy of the universe as the primal matter of things, and the radial as a subsidiary effect of the determinism of matter. Why not, suggested Teilhard, reverse the perspective, and consider the radial as the primitive and consistent and the tangential as a by-product statistically caused by the interactions of the rudimentary centers of consciousness, which are not perceptible in the 'pre-living', but discernible since matter has reached an advanced degree of complexity?[118]

---

[110] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 57.

[111] For example, Garrigan, op. cit., p. 38: "Some of his arguments can be turned around to give perplexing conclusions; e.g. if the 'within' applies by extrapolation to all forms lower than man, then the 'without' ought to apply to all forms higher than man. How can a 'without' be ascribed to a pure spirit?"

[112] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 78.

[113] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 62. [114] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 57.

[115] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 225.

[116] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 57.

[117] Ibid., p. 72; Ibid., p. 301. William Temple, Nature, Man and God (London: Macmillan, 1956), suggested that mind may be explained by naturalistic explanation, creative inbreak, or mind immanent from the beginning in matter. None of these approaches is adequate; however, the

Teilhard assured his readers: "*Energies of a psychic nature everywhere control the development of life; and man by his thought has renewed the face of the earth.*"[119] Man converges, instead of diverging like all other species on earth. His end must be in some paroxysmal state of maturation which, by scientific probability alone, must illumine all the darkest menances of the future.[120]

Teilhard assumed the existence and influence of a powerful dynamism in the world.[121] Many biologists have advocated that nature has such an

---

second and third are acceptable; but he prefers the third. This explains the appearance rather than the creation of consciousness. Mind emerges and controls the process; therefore, it must have been there from the beginning. He calls this approach "immanent theism." See also Rust, "The Incarnation and a Sacramental Universe," p. 11, soon to be published as a chapter in his latest book, which deals with science and religion.

[118] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," *AM*, p. 265.

[119] Teilhard de Chardin, "What Should We Think of Transformism?," *VP*, p. 159.

[120] Teilhard de Chardin, "The End of the Species," *FM*, p. 301.

[121] Teilhard de Chardin, *MPN*, p. 32.

inner drive.[122] For him, the dynamism, or inner drive, is a psychic power. He suggested:

> Starting from the lowest terms at which it arrives, let us try, moving upwards, to appreciate the work of synthesis implied in the fitting together of the pieces that our scientific analysis has so clearly and usefully taken apart. Then we shall be struck by the necessity of which we shall find ourselves of resorting to the continuous and dominating influence of the 'inventive--that is to say psychic--power' as a physical explanation both of the constant upward movement of elementary terms to build always more mechanically improbable groups; and, in the course of this upward movement, the astonishing expansions of spontaneity that we witness.[123]

By "inventive" he meant everything in human activity which contributes in any way to the organico-social development of the Noosphere (the sphere of consciousness) and the growth of new powers for the arrangement, or complexification, of matter within it.[124] In Teilhard's view, there is an inner drive toward consciousness; and one can measure the organic complexity, or arrangement, of matter by its degree of consciousness.[125]

---

[122] Rust, op. cit., p. 168; see also his Towards a Theological Understanding of History, op. cit., p. 134, where he suggests that history itself possesses an inner drive.

[123] Teilhard de Chardin, "What Should We Think of Transformism?," VP, p. 158.

[124] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 202.

[125] Teilhard de Chardin, "Does Mankind Move Biologically upon Itself?," FM, p. 253. Zaehner, op. cit., pp. 168-169, quoting Engels' Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 51, notes Engels' position in this regard: "The course of history is governed by inner general laws . . . . Historical events thus appear on the whole to be likewise governed by chance. But where on the surface accident holds sway, there actually it is always governed by inner, hidden laws, and . . . it is only a matter of discovering these laws."

The triumph of spirit. Evolution does not necessarily argue for materialism. Rather, it inclines toward the position of an essential triumph of spirit. Evolution is capable of seeing in the universe a greatness, depth, and unity which are the natural environment of the Christian faith. It is probably more capable along these lines than any theory of fixed species.[126] In light of the link between things which evolution establishes, he said, "everything becomes, if not spirit, at least distant preparation, spiritized 'matter'."[127] However, nothing is more spiritual than its organization (complexity) allows it to be. Chauchard notes that in Teilhard's view "everything springs from complexification, but this complexification is the incarnation of the spiritual.[128] For Teilhard, the axis along which evolution progresses is of a spiritual rather than a material nature.[129]

---

[126] Teilhard de Chardin, "What Should We Think of Transformism?," VP, p. 159.

[127] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 134.

[128] Chauchard, op. cit., p. 140.

[129] Teilhard's spiritualistic viewpoint is somewhat reminiscent of the position of James Ward, op. cit., pp. 12-13: "We accept the spiritualistic standpoint and its Realm of Ends as the more fundamental." Ward called this position "Spiritual Monism." Ward concluded, with Spinoza, that all individual things are animated in varying degrees. Everything has within it the tendency to preserve its condition and to prove itself. Ibid., p. 431, he concluded this because "It takes account of both the factors of experience; and secondly, because, while it is impossible from the standpoint of Nature to reach Spirit, it is only from the standpoint of Spirit that Nature can be understood: In a word we take the universe to be spiritual--a realm of ends." In his Naturalism and Agnosticism, vol. I (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1899), p. vii, Ward also assumed that until an idealistic (or spiritualistic) view of the world can be supported, any attempt to advocate theism is a waste of time.

Teilhard observed that transformism (or evolution) logically implies neither materialism nor atheism. He added:

> As usual our thought cannot refrain from taking one step more than science requires. Where the facts only show a succession of births, it will generally perceive a link of being, that is to say will admit that something substantial becomes purer and actually passes from the material to the spiritual pole of the world. Let us take the theory in this extreme form, which can easily be argued in terms acceptable by the most orthodox philosophy. Who will fail to see that this belief favours spiritualism rather than materialism? Would you insist on placing the primacy of being in the plural and unconscious at the risk of making the world unthinkable and incapable of life? Then everything reduced to its lowest terms becomes matter.[130]

Teilhard advocated a spiritual evolutionism which places the future of the world's development and being on the side of synthesis, or spirit. Such a theory is contingent upon belief in a higher pole of the universe. He called this belief as "evolutionism by convergence."[131] He suggested that from the time of man's appearance the element of consciousness becomes "individualised in the form of an autonomous spiritual principle.[132] He reasoned:

> For its reflective and inventive forward spring it is in some sort necessary that Life, duplicating its evolutionary motive centre, should henceforth be sustained by two centres of action, separate and conjoined, one of consciousness and the other of complexity. And herein, if I am right, we may find a bridge of an experimental kind flung across a gap which has hitherto been held to be scientifically unbrigeable. In hominised evolution the Physical and the Psychic, the Without and the Within, Matter and Consciousness, are all found to be functionally linked in one tangible process.[133]

---

[130] Teilhard de Chardin, op. cit., p. 133.   [131] Ibid., p. 138.

[132] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 209.

[133] Ibid.

III. ORTHOGENESIS

Teilhard's apologetic would fall apart without the inclusion of the concept of orthogenesis. Through this concept has been suggested and implied in various foregoing statements, considerable space will be given here to an analysis of this idea.

Definition of orthogenesis. Teilhard defined orthogenesis as

> the fundamental drift as a result of which the stuff of the universe is seen to behave as though moving towards corpuscular states continually more complex in their material arrangement and, psychologically, continually more interiorised: this drift, we should add, being, in the case of higher living beings, directly involved in an increasing concentration of the nervous system.[134]

For him, the term "orthogenesis" could not be dispensed with even though some ambiguity surrounds it. The same is true of the term "evolution."[135] For Teilhard, orthogenesis was simply an oriented development. It describes a vectoral quality; and without the term one could not speak of "trends" and "phyla".[136] Initially, it does not convey any idea of finality. He considered the term indispensable for describing the apparent property of living matter to fashion a system in which "terms succeed each other experimentally, following constantly increasing degrees of centro-complexity."[137] He noted,

---

[134] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, pp. 90-91. He also noted in PM, p. 108: "This law of controlled complication, the mature stage of the process in which we get first the micro-molecule then the mega-molecule and finally the first cells, is known to biologists as orthogenesis."

[135] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 215.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 108.

"Without orthogenesis life would only have spread; with it there is an ascent of life that is invincible."[138]

Since the appearance of man, and in him, the mechanism of ortho-selection increasingly abdicates to the effects of ortho-election in the expansion and development of the phenomenon of life on earth. He concluded: "Since man and in man, simple evolution tends gradually to mutate into auto- (or self-) evolution."[139]

Defense of orthogenesis. Teilhard regretted there was not much unanimity among scientists relating to orthogenesis, for it was clear to him that the observable facts point to a great orthogenetic movement of living forms involving an involution on an increasingly greater complexity and consciousness.[140] He saw no basic contradiction between the ideas of mutation and orthogenesis. After all, it is by the association of these two mechanisms that men act throughout life.[141] He considered the orthogenetic view of animal evolution to be gradually gaining favor among scientists. However, orthogenesis, he said, "only achieves full validity, in terms of my argument, to the extent that it implies a continuous psychic 'chain' going back to the beginning of life."[142]

---

[138] Ibid., p. 109.

[139] Teilhard de Chardin, "Note on the Present Reality and Evolutionary Significance of a Human Orthogenesis," VP, p. 254.

[140] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 140.

[141] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, pp. 140-141. In PM, p. 110, he saw even pre-human groping as "directed chance."

[142] Teilhard de Chardin, "From the Pre-human to the Ultra-human," FM, p. 292.

Considering the scientific account of the vast structure of living forms as it slowly becomes visible to our eyes through approximately a billion years of time, it is not possible to be content with "numbers." Teilhard believed that evidence is growing in support of the idea that scientists must think in terms of vectors and reintroduce the concept of orthogenesis.[143] The outstanding feature in phylogenesis is, to the best of our knowledge, the canalization of forms. This is proof, he believed that:

> Followed along major tracts of time, chromosomic characteristics are not the inert 'grains' and 'isotopes' that geneticists suppose, but in fact elementary vectors, consisting of very short oriented segments, reacting additively, always in a single favoured direction, to the complex 'topography' of the geographical and biological milieu in which they find themselves.[144]

He hastened to add that there is no mysticism involved or implied in the recognition of this phenomenon.[145]

On the human level, he suggested, it is false to assume that the human being in us starts with zero in each new generation. There is, on the contrary, an accumulated effect of co-reflexion which begins with each generation at a higher turn of the ascending spiral. The world is steadily becoming more orderly and better understood "orthogenetically."[146] For example, Bergson was probably not Plato's equal; but because he lived two thousand years after Plato, he perceived and understood things that Plato could neither perceive nor understand.[147]

---

[143] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Defense of Orthogenesis," VP, pp. 270-271.

[144] Ibid., p. 272. [145] Ibid.

[146] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, pp. 243-244.

[147] Ibid.

Movement of orthogenesis toward spirit. Evolution is an orthogenesis toward spirit. Teilhard said, "The Universal whole, the same as each element, defines itself to my eyes by a particular movement which animates it. But what can that movement be? Where is it leading us? . . . 'Toward Spirit'."[148] In evolution we are considering only one event. The event is the overall orthogenesis of life towards increasingly immanent spontaneity.[149]

Man is the ultimate effect of the covergence of the universe upon itself by arrangement. The process of convergence is accelerating with the passage of time. We must follow this phenomenon until we see, he said, "that the biological and the 'spiritual' are in fact one."[150] In man, spirit can be seen at its highest level of development.

Teilhard concluded concerning the relation of matter to spirit that spirit is "no longer independent of matter, or in opposition to it, but laboriously emerging from it under the attraction of God by way of synthesis and centration."[151] This relationship which has been brought to light is the most revolutionary and fruitful facet of the modern age.

---

[148] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 16. Zaehner, op. cit., pp. 166-167, observes that in Engels' view "matter is not just mechanical movement, . . . it is impulse, vital life-spirit, and tension. . . ." He continues, ibid., p. 177, saying Engels concedes "there must be 'a vital principle, more or less the soul' which survives all living organisms. . . . In place of Hegel's absolute Idea he put Marx's 'matter'; but matter for him . . . was Aristotelian 'matter' plus Aristotelian 'form', it was 'matter' informed and diverted by a power that manifests itself as eternal law and this power is what is normally called 'spirit.'"

[149] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 151.

[150] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 288, quoting a letter of Teilhard dated June 19, 1951.

[151] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942", FM, p. 93.

For Teilhard, man, the representative of the highest sphere which evolution has attained, became the key to understanding the universe. Man, who refuses to be forced into mechanistic cosmogony, becomes the unknown of an insoluble function when expressed as starting from matter. Why not allow him to be the key to understanding the Universe? Why not consider him the known term of the world? "Why not," he said, "resolve Matter by Spirit?"[152] His approach to the world began at this point. He sought to build a physics which started from Spirit, testifying, "I have tried for my own account this way of the problem. And at once it seemed to me that the conquered Reality fell stripped at my feet."[153] He felt that future science will be compelled to build its explanations and understanding of the experiential world on the spirit.[154] He once said concerning his purpose: "I must live only to develop spirituality in immediacy,--, at the same time, by the assurance that the spirit must win, and has hidden within it a power that will ensure its victory. Faith in Spirit."[155]

The temporal succession of cosmogenesis, biogenesis, and anthropogenesis is generally accepted. However, Teilhard drew conclusions which are different from those of one involved only in a one-tracked quest for knowledge. He was convinced that all pre-human entities are drawn in the direction of man. He was also convinced that man is being drawn toward greater consciousness and spirit. He is ultimately being drawn toward God. He noted that an evolution based on matter will never save man, "because all accumulated determinisms cannot give a shadow of liberty."[156] However, an evolution based on spirit conserves the laws of the so-called inorganic world, and at the same time leads directly to thought, "because a mass of free elements, working in disorder, act in agreement with the statistic laws of Physics. It saves at the same time Man and Matter."[157] Evolution appears to the keen observer as a mass movement of a consciousness, primevally pluralized and, therefore, almost materialized, towards increasingly more spirituality.[158]

---

[152] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 18. [153] Ibid.

[154] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 159.

[155] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 241. In DM, p. 86, he predicted, "One day the whole divinisable substance of matter will have passed into the souls of men; all the chosen dynamisms will have been recuperated: and then our world will be ready for the Parousia."

Teilhard defined "spirit" as the "'Spirit of synthesis and sublimation' in which, laboriously, amidst trials and checks without limit, is concentrated the power of unity diffused in the Universal Multiple: Spirit born at the heart of Matter."[159] He observed that when everything else has passed away, Spirit will remain.[160]

Evaluation. Teilhard saw history as a spiral ascending toward ever more consciousness and spirit. One looks backward to matter and forward to spirit. His views of the within of things and orthogenesis have been questioned by many critics. His views are contrary to what most biologists hold, according to Polanyi.[161] Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the apparent respect of Polanyi for Teilhard. Thorpe points out some of the major objections of biologists to the idea of orthogenesis,[162] but goes on to say, "He demonstrates, to my mind most convincingly, in regard to the animal kingdom, the existence of an over-all tendency towards increasing complexity and the development of mind."[163] Thorpe continues, observing that the least that can be said about Teilhard's belief that evolution can lead to a spiritual ascent by the unification of the mind of mankind is that it "is not inconsistent with what has already happened on the earth. . . . it seems to me that, as far as they go, the facts are on his side."[164]

---

[156] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 19. [157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid., pp. 19-20. [159] Ibid., p. 20. [160] Ibid., p. 26.

[161] Michael Polanyi, "An Epic Theory of Evolution," Saturday Review, XLIII (January 30, 1960), 21.

Chauchard suggests that the biologist is in a unique position to prophesy about the meaning of history. He can foresee what ought to happen if evolution carries out its normal course and promises.[165] However, Mooney warns, from the side of theology, that Teilhard should beware of making too simple an identification of what is known of man's future on earth with the ultimate movement of man towards a divine destiny.[166]

---

[162] Thorpe, op. cit., pp. 8-9. Here he lists two reasons the biologist often finds it impossible to accept the evolutionary process as indicating creation in the form of guidance from the outside: "First, that mutations, which are the raw material which natural selection has to act upon, appear to be random and not in any way specifically adapted to the needs of the organism or stock. Secondly, all that is known about mutation rates tends to confirm the conclusion that they are too low for an organism to be forced, by the repeated occurrence of mutations in a given direction, along a line of evolution against the action of natural selection. Thus there seems to be no basis at all on which to account for the occurrence of orthogenetic trends or 'orthogenesis'. . . . Whatever the explanation of these phenomena, we now find it impossible to believe that a species can be, so to speak, pushed by its mutations against the influence of the environment. The facts of the mutation rate assuming that mutation rates which have been observed in animals and plants by scientists were also operative in all of world history effectively eliminate the kind of creative evolution envisaged by Bergson, according to which it was supposed that an élan vital could be directing the course of evolution, solely by controlling the nature of variations. In that sense belief in the creativeness of the evolutionary process is, I think, untenable.

The other apparent objection seems, however, to rest on much less secure ground. It concerns the description of varisation as 'random'. This word 'random' is often used in an extremely loose, in fact almost meaningless, way. . . . if the word is used in biology at all, it must be given a relative meaning and so we have to use the word 'random' only in respect of an adequately defined situation or background."

[163] Ibid., p. 16. [164] Ibid., p. 17.

IV. APPEARANCE OF LIFE

Definition of life. Whitehead concluded that biology is the study of larger organisms and physics is the study of the small ones.[167] In other words, life pervades all the stuff of the universe. Teilhard's view of the nature of life is in keeping with this observation. He questioned, "Why should we not simply define Life as the specific property of Matter, the Stuff of the Universe, carried by evolution into the zone of highest complexity?"[168] When life appeared on the face of the earth, evolution passed a critical point and entered a new sphere of being the biosphere. He defined "biosphere" in lucid language:

> By biosphere we mean . . . the actual skin of organic substance which we see to-day enveloping the earth: in spite of its thinness, a truly structural layer of the planet, a sensitive film on the heavenly body that bears us--and an admirably adjusted device in which, if we know how to look at it, we may see the bond . . . that holds together biology, physics and astronomy within the same cosmic dynamism.[169]

---

[165] Chauchard, op. cit., p. 43. [166] Mooney, op. cit., p. 205.

[167] Thorpe, op. cit., p. 97, citing Whitehead.

[168] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 88.

[169] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 40. In "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 157, he noted concerning the origin of the term "biosphere": "This term, invented by Suess, is sometimes interpreted . . . in the sense of the 'terrestrial zone containing life'. I use it here to mean the actual layer of vitalised substance enveloping the earth."

The degree of vitalization, or life, attained by matter at any point in question defines and measures the convolution of the universe.[170] To put it another way, the unique attributes of life are due entirely to the degree of complexity achieved at a given level.[171]

Because of the orthogenetic process, the individual entity becomes part of a chain. It becomes an intermediary, a link, which no longer "exists" but "transmits". As Teilhard said, "Life is more real than lives."[172] "On the one hand," he concluded, "the individual unit is lost in number, on the other it is torn apart in the collectivity, and in yet a third direction it stretches out in becoming."[173] Life is probably limited to a few rare planets. Nevertheless, he felt increasingly compelled to view it as an underlying current in evolution. In the flow of this current, he wrote, "matter tends to order itself upon itself with the emergence of consciousness."[174] Evolution moved towards man and now moves beyond him.

Origin of life. It becomes increasingly clear that organic life emerges from some pre-life.[175] Beneath the cell lie the megamolecule, the molecule, and the atom. Teilhard pictured the emergence of the biosphere (life) in vivid terms. Through an indefinite, but immense, duration, the earth cooled enough to permit the formation on its surface of chains of molecules of the carbon type. At this time the earth was covered with a layer of water from which the first traces of the continents were emerging. Everything appeared to be inanimate. Even if filtered with our most efficient modern filters, there would have been no mobile particles; and even our most powerful microscopes would have discovered only inert aggregates of matter. Then, after a sufficient passage of time, those same waters began to quiver, spottily, with minute creatures. From this initial proliferation emerged the vast profusion of organic matter whose interwoven complexity came to form the biosphere.[176] Life, properly speaking, begins with the cell, which is the natural granule of life, as the atom is the natural granule of simple, elemental matter.[177] With the appearance of the cell came observable life, and also the change from pre-consciousness to consciousness.[178] Life is a property of all matter but it is perceptible only where complexity exceeds a certain critical value.[179] Life is a material effect of complexity.[180]

---

[170] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 48.

[171] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 217.

[172] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 111. [173] Ibid.

[174] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 173.

[175] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 130.

Teilhard was convinced that life was produced only once on earth. This is because of the irreversible nature of evolution. The conditions were right only at one time in history, and it is impossible to reproduce those conditions again (except possibly in the laboratory). "Protoplasm," he said, "is no longer formed directly from the organic substances of the earth."[181] The genesis of life is a unique event. It happened once and will never be repeated.[182] At that time, virus and simple unicellular life were produced.

---

[176] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 78. [177] Ibid., p. 79.

[178] Ibid., pp. 88-90. [179] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 24.

[180] Ibid., p. 19. See also "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 214, where he said, "The phenomena of life and consciousness . . . might well be nothing more than the properties peculiar to matter when carried to a very high degree of arrangement and centration."

We can no more pin-point the absolute zero in time when life began than we can fix the advent of any other experimental reality.[183] However, he does speculate that life began more than six hundred million years ago.[184] It is probable that initially life extended no further than the liquid layer of the primordial ocean.[185] The beginnings, or roots, of the tree of life, said Teilhard, "are lost to view in the unknowable world of soft tissue and the metamorphosis of primaeval slime."[186]

Even though its beginnings cannot be pin-pointed, life is no superficial accident in nature. It was ready to seep through any crack in the cosmos to fulfil its potentiality.[187] Teilhard's thought here parallels to some degree that of John Oman, who posited that the organic is potential in the inorganic from the beginning, and that the emergence of conscious mind rests on potential mind at the beginning of life.[188] Earlier, Leibniz also suggested that no body is really inorganic.

---

[181] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 97.

[182] Ibid., pp. 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, and 147. [183] Ibid., p. 77.

[184] Teilhard de Chardin, "From the Pre-human to the Ultra-human," FM, p. 290.

[185] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 40.

[186] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 133.

[187] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 35.

[188] John Oman, The Natural and the Supernatural (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931).

Everything in the universe is organic. What appears to be inorganic is really organic in a low degree. There is nothing fallow, sterile, dead, chaotic or confused in the universe, except in appearance.[189] William Temple suggested, in the same vein, that matter, life, mind and spirit all presuppose the levels lower than themselves; and each finds its full actualization only when it is possessed or indwelt by the level above it.[190] For Teilhard, life is not the inception of something absolutely new. It is a metamorphosis of something already in existence.[191] In other words, complex being is derived from simple being rather than being formed by spontaneous generation. There is no spontaneous generation of life.

As life expands it ramifies.[192] Teilhard concluded:

> Considered globally, the appearance of the first cells gives rise to the same problems as do the origins of each of those later stems we call 'phyla'. The universe had _already begun to ramify_ and it doubtless goes on ramifying indefinitely, _even below_ the tree of life.[193]

Process of life. Life is the central phenomenon of evolution.[194] However, the biosphere would never have appeared were it not for the involution of matter upon itself, that is, "without the closed chemistry of molecules, cells and phylectic branches. . . ."[195]

---

[189] Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz, _The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings_, trans. Robert Latta (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 253, 256.

[190] Temple, _op. cit._

[191] Paulinus F. Forsthoefel, "Beneath the Microscope," _The World of Teilhard_, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 101.

[192] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 113. [193] _Ibid._, p. 96.

[194] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," _FM_, p. 215.

Teilhard saw a "curve" of life. A rising curve of life can be drawn (on graph paper) using as its co-ordinates Time and the quantity (and quality) of nervous tissue in existence at each geological age.[196] He also concluded that the more scientific of available choices would picture life as a great spiral, pushing irreversibly upward. Life is an ascending spiral.[197] It is a unity which extends beyond the plurality and rivalry of individual beings. Said Teilhard, it "displays an organically articulated unity which manifestly indicates the phenomenon of growth."[198]

Matter can grow in complexity only if the proper elements are brought close together. He suggested a formula which expresses the process of biogenesis: "'Compression/complexity/consciousness' or further, if one prefers it: 'Compression/Competition/Complexity/Consciousness'."[199] It is only under pressure, a pressure that increases, that vitalized matter reacts by ultra-organizing.[200]

---

[195] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 273.

[196] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 65. In PM, p. 116, he said: "In just this way the naturalist sees the curve of growth followed by the branches of life. At the outset the phylum corresponds to the 'discovery', by groping, of a new type of organism that is both viable and advantageous. But this new type will not attain its most economical or efficient form all at once. For a certain period of time it devotes all its strength, so to speak, to groping about within itself. Try-out follows try-out, without being finally adopted. Then at last perfection comes within sight, and from that moment the rhythm of change slows down. The new invention, having reached the limit of its potentialities, enters its phase of conquest. Stronger now than its less perfected neighbours, the newly born group spreads and at the same time consolidates. It multiplies, but without further diversification. It has now entered its fully grown period and at the same time its period of stability."

[197] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 212.

[198] Ibid., p. 139. See also p. 112.

[199] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 159.

Life evolves regionally and in jerks.[201] It is the mammals that form the dominant branch of the tree of life; and if this is true, he said, "the primates . . . are its leading shoot, and the anthropoids are the bud in which this shoot ends up."[202]

For Teilhard, the question of transformism is settled beyond doubt. He stated, "To shake our belief now in the reality of biogenesis, it would be necessary to uproot the tree of life and undermine the entire structure of the world."[203]

Cerebralization. In the classification of higher living beings, the degree of cerebralization (or cephalization) is the major factor. This involves both the number of cerebral neurones and their degree of perfection in structure and function.[204] The degree of cerebralization measures true complexity.[205] Ultimately, he projects, this will lead to another critical point, on the other side of which lies the spiritual sphere. Such a critical point is reached every time nature reaches the greatest complexity possible within a given order or sphere.

Goal of life. Life is unending discovery or movement; and that movement is in a definite direction.[206] The direction is towards unification. Such a hope, he said, "can only be realized if it finds its expression in greater cohesion and greater human solidarity."[207] Only life with a goal has meaning.[208] It must either have a goal or it is absurd.[209] He asserted, "I believe I can see a direction and a line of progress for life, a line and a direction which are in fact so well marked that I am convinced their reality will be universally admitted by the science of tomorrow."[210] He concluded that in relation to human action, entropy has no meaning. On the other hand, life, conceived as the growing interiorization of matter, offers a line of direction for our freedom of choice. Mankind is involved irresistibly in a phenomenon of socialization. Confronted by this phenomenon, we must act to conform to the processes of the world of which we are a part. Of the possible alternatives, we must choose that which appears to promote and preserve the highest degree of consciousness in us. He noted, "If we turn out to have been wrong in this, then the Universe has no less gone astray.[211] Concerning the goal toward which evolution leads us, he said:

---

[200] Ibid.

[201] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformist Question," VP, p. 12.

[202] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 160. For further expansion of this and related ideas see MPN, pp. 49 and 55; PM, p. 159; and "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 109.

[203] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 140.

[204] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 49. [205] Ibid., p. 56.

> At first, we could only note with astonishment, but not explain the persistent rise of a fraction of the world, against the current, towards ever more improbable states of complexity. Now

---

[206] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, pp. 72 and 64; "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, p. 30.

[207] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 72.

[208] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 91.

[209] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 78.

[210] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 142.

[211] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 49.

> we understand that this paradoxical movement is sustained by a prime mover ahead. The branch climbs, not supported by its base but suspended from the future. That is what renders the movement not only irreversible but irresistible. From this point of view (which is that not only of simple antecedences, but of causality itself) evolution assumes its true figure for our mind and our heart. It is certainly not 'creative', as science for a brief moment believed; but it is the expression of creation, for our experience, in time and space.
>
> And it is thus, in the end, that above the rediscovered greatness of man, above the revealed greatness of humanity, not violating but preserving the integrity of science, the face of God reappears in our modern universe.[212]

Darwin versus Lamrack. The transformist movement is slowly and gradually becoming aware of its own implications. In its history, the essence of transformism has been considered, successively, the adaptation of living forms to their environment and the inheritance of acquired characteristics, natural selection, monophyletism, or the theory of descent. " It now appears," said Teilhard, "that underlying these particular explanations, a much more general and profound idea is coming to light: that of a certain physical 'immanence' . . . of life."[213] He believed that the Darwinian era of survival by natural selection had been succeeded by a Lamarckian era, an era of "Super-Life brought about by calculated invention. . . ."[214] Evolution is interiorized and given purpose in man; and simultaneously, he noted, "in the degree in which the strivings of human inventiveness need to be controlled in their operation and sustained in their energies, it imposes upon itself a moral order and 'mysticises' itself."[215]

---

[212] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 231.

[213] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformist Paradox," VP, p. 101.

[214] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM p. 212.

Every living being passes on to his descendents the being which was inherited by him. This inheritance by the descendent is accentuated in a giving direction, in keeping with the line of which he is a part. All the lines seem to move, in varying degrees of speed, in the direction of greater spontaneity and consciousness. Said Teilhard, "Something passes, something grows, through the long chain of living creatures."[216] We are forced to abandon explaining everything as a survival of the fittest or as a mechanical adaptation to environment.[217] He concluded, "We have no longer the crawling 'sine'curve, but the spiral which springs upward as it turns. From one zoological layer to another, something is carried over: it grows, jerkily, but ceaselessly and in a constant direction."[218]

---

[215] Ibid.

[216] Teilhard de Chardin, "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, p. 25.

[217] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 150.

[218] Ibid., p. 148. See also pp. 149-150, where Teilhard defends himself against the possible charge of being a Lamarckian: "In various quarters I shall be accused of showing too Lamarckian a bent. . ., of giving an exaggerated influence to the Within in the organic arrangement of bodies. But be pleased to remember that, in the 'morphogenetic' action of instinct as here understood, an essential part is left to the Darwinian play of external forces and to chance. It is only really through strokes of chance that life proceeds, but strokes of chance which are recognised and grasped--that is to say, psychically selected. Properly understood the 'anti-chance' of the Neo-Lamarckian is not the mere negation of Darwinian chance. On the contrary it appears as its utilisation. There is a functional complementariness between the two factors; we could call it 'symbiosis'.

It may be added that if we give its proper place to the essential distinction (still too often ignored) between a biology of small units and a biology of big complexes--in the same way as there is a physics of

V. SUMMARY

Teilhard constructed his credo with an apologetic motive in mind. He began with the concept of evolution, a basic idea generally accepted by the scientific community to which he spoke. He saw two poles in nature, the material and the spiritual. The movement of evolution consists of a progress from the immanent, material pole to the transcendent, spiritual pole.

Teilhard began with what the scientist could see and understand as a scientist-- the observable phenomena of the world. This provided him with a common denominator with the unbeliever. His next step was to posit an inner side to all things. He contended that spirit exists, at least to some rudimentary degree, in everything, even the most outwardly inanimate elements of nature. He defended his contention on the basis of the existence of forces of attraction between minute elements at the atomic level and the force of love at the human level. Whereas initially the material side of things dominates, the spiritual side will ultimately prevail.

The transfer of predominance from the material to the spiritual occurs in time through the process of evolution and in accord with a law of complexity/consciousness. On one hand, the material side of things is destined to diminish through entropy. On the other hand, there

---

the infinitesimal and another of the immense--we appreciate the advisability of distinguishing two major zones of the organic world, and treating them differently. On the one hand is the Lamarckian zone of very big complexes (above all, man) in which anti-chance can be seen to dominate; on the other hand the Darwinian zone of small complexes, lower forms of life, in which anti-chance is so swamped by chance that it can only be appreciated by reasoning and conjecture, that is to say indirectly."

is a steady rise in consciousness as the result of the increasingly complex arrangements of matter. The first step in his apologetic supports a dynamic (evolutionary) view of the world. The second step contends that this movement is in a definite direction. At this level, he contends only that it is a general drift towards more spirit.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRIT AS ACHIEVING ITSELF IN THE PERSONAL

The third point of Teilhard's credo is, "I believe that the Spirit achieves itself in the Personal."[1] It is also the next step in his apologetic. This chapter analyzes the major thrust of his thinking as he developed it at this level.

I. THE APPEARANCE OF MAN

Hominization. Teilhard described hominization as "the individual and instantaneous leap from instinct to thought."[2] He added, it is also, in a broader sense, "the progressive phylectic spiritualisation in human civilisation of all the forces contained in the animal world."[3] There is a threshold, a break, a change of state between man and everything that has preceded him in the evolutionary process.[4] With his appearance, evolution has entered a new sphere. It has passed another critical point. Man is conceived as hominized matter.[5] He is life carried to its limit. He represents the stuff of the cosmos in its most complete and fully realized form.[6]

---

[1] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, unnumbered page preceding the title page.

[2] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 180. [3] Ibid.

[4] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phenomenon of Man," VP, p. 166.

[5] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 16. [6] Ibid.

The appearance of man is an important turning point in evolution From that point onward the forces of confluence become dominant. Teilhard said, "At the heart of this new milieu, the branches themselves of one and the same group succeed in uniting, or rather they become welded together even before they have managed to separate off."[7] The secret of hominization is found in this coalescence of elements, he said, and in "the spherical geometry of the earth and psychical curvature of the mind harmonising to counterbalance the individual and collective forces of dispersion in the world and to impose unification."[8] Man represents the leading shoot of evolution, an evolution which is a simultaneous process of material complexification and psychic interiorization. This process is continually accelerating.[9] If the movement of the world toward the highest degree of consciousness is the essence of biological evolution, rather than an optical illusion, then man is situated at the topmost point of the curve of life. It is he, Teilhard said, "by his emergence and existence, who finally proves the reality and defines the trajectory--'the dot on the i'. . . ."[10] However, he said:

> We must admit that even 'hominised' life only advances tentatively, by the effect of great numbers and the play of chance. And, however, much we believe in the spirit we must perforce recognise also that the creative operation comes to our knowledge as a process, and that it is the function of science to recognise its laws, leaving to philosophy the task of discerning the share and influence of an intention in the phenomenon.[11]

---

[7] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 242. [8] Ibid., p. 243.

[9] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 13.

[10] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 67.

[11] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Australopithecines and the 'Missing Link' in Evolution," AM, p. 130.

Teilhard noted that the more we find of human fossil remains and the more we know about their anatomic features and succession in geological time, the more probable it becomes that the human species made no sweeping change in nature at the moment of its birth. Man has emerged phylectically, in the same way as any other species.[12] In order to provide him with a cradle, and anthropogenesis with a natural framework, it is necessary that the general phylogenesis of life be as apparent as the individual orthogenesis through which every living creature passes.[13]

In Teilhard's opinion, anthropogenesis is bi-polar. It encompasses two centers. One center was located in Asia and the other in Africa. The Asian center did not lead to Homo sapiens; therefore, it proved abortive. The African center led to complete hominization, and is therefore the more important of the two.[14]

In the eyes of science, things which are at long range can only be seen in bulk. Therefore, he said, "the 'first man' is, and can only be, a crowd, and his infancy is made up of thousands and thousands of years."[15] The problem of monogenism appears to elude science for this reason. "At those depths of time when hominisation took place," he concluded, "the presence and the movements of a unique couple are positively ungraspable, unrevealable to our eyes at no matter what magnification."[16] He added, "Accordingly one can say that there is room in this interval for anything that a trans-experimental source of knowledge might demand."[17] Science can discern various species only at the group stage and at a great distance from their point of origin. Therefore, the question of an original couple is not relevant to science. He concluded, "At so great a distance in the past, our scientific vision of life can distinguish nothing below 'population.'"[18] Though nothing can be positively said either for or against monogenism, science appears to be able to speak decisively in favor of monophyletism (a single phylum).[19] In this, Teilhard was in agreement with most other experts.[20]

---

[12] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 184. [13] Ibid., p. 138.

[14] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 337. de Terra, op. cit., p. 118, suggests that more information is needed before Teilhard's thesis that man's origin was in Africa can be accepted.

[15] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 186.

[16] Ibid., note 1.

Chauchard observes that man, through the possession of a more complex brain, has revealed his spiritual superiority over the monkey from the very beginning. Man has always been man, Science is unable to say when true man appeared; but despite various intermediate stages, he appeared abruptly and suddenly.[21] Evolutionism postulates that in the descent of the non-human primate, man appeared. With man there was an appearance of a new nature. Man is not the result of any ability of the less complex to produce the more complex. Rather, he appears through the use of the less complex to produce the more complex.[22] Evolutionism simply expresses the factuality of a descent of species, one from the other. Chauchard stretches the point to distortion in suggesting that this scientific position is thoroughly compatible with the philosophical position of ontological fixism, the assertion that each species is separate in its nature and essence. "Instead of saying that each species was directly formed by spontaneous generation," says Chauchard, "we say that its embryo had its birth in change in a previous embryo of a similar but more simple nature."[23]

---

[17] Ibid. In contemplating the Biblical Eve, mother of the race, he wrote to a cousin, MM, p. 159: "I was surprised to find Peguy so close to me. . . . His concern to defend the 'carnal cradle' of Christ fits in with my own most personal prepossessions. And, just for a moment, I have a slight grudge against him for having taken the subject of Eve. Eve, the 'natural' mother, whose face, so full of mystery, blends into the distant past, shrouded in symbol and legend. What an admirable personification of the ties so essential and so vital which indissolubly bind our human bundle to nature's laborious and patient advance."

[18] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 65, note 1. Garrigan, op. cit., p. 36, speculates that certain techniques, "in which the evidence is studied which the past has left in our genes and enzymes, have only begun to yield a new kind of history. Their story of the ages beyond memory, contrary to the expectations of Teilhard, may shed light on the evolution of man's body and even on such topics as the monogenetic origin of the human race."

[19] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 188.

[20] de Terra, op. cit., p. 45. Robert T. Francoeur, "Introduction: A New World Vision," The World of Teilhard, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 19, observes that from a scientific point of view, Teilhard inclined toward monogenism. However, this cannot be scientifically proven one way or the other. Teilhard favored monogenism primarily because of his religious and philosophical background. Science is unable to speak regarding an instantaneous impulse of God hidden under the phenomena to produce the individual soul.

In writing about the possible success of hominization, Teilhard severely criticized the Marxist view of man. He concluded it is impossible:

---

[21] Chauchard, op. cit., pp. 91 and 94. [22] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

[23] Ibid., p. 91. Ibid., pp. 92-93, Chauchard describes the process of hominization: "In the series of ascending complexification, the process of hominization consists in the erectification of the body, and in the acquirement of permanent biped status, which frees the hands and which, by altering the facial and cranial dynamics, affords the cranial space necessary for the brain and for development of the face and forehead. All of this is in preparation for the really specific characteristics of man--a brain more complex than others--which will govern the use of the hand and the articulation of language. It is probable that the preponderant factor was a series of mutations which increased in the developing embryo the division of neurones, but this is a distinct, zoological branch peculiar to the appearance of man."

> for a purely immanent current of hominisation to live wholly, in a closed circuit, upon itself. With no outlet ahead offering a way of escape from total death, no supreme centre of personalisation to radiate love among the human cells, it is a frozen world that in the end must disintegrate entirely in a Universe without heart or ultimate purpose. However powerful its impetus in the early stages of the course of biological evolution into which it has thrust itself, the Marxist anthropogenesis, because it rules out the existence of an irreversible Centre at its consummation, can neither justify nor sustain its momentum to the end.[24]

He added that in itself worldly faith is not enough to move the earth forward.[25]

Man as the key to understanding the universe. Teilhard posited man as the key to the universe.[26] He suggested that we are moving toward an era of human science in which man will come to understand that he is the key to the whole science of nature.[27] Man should be regarded as the known term of the world, and matter should be resolved by spirit. Man will not allow himself to be forced into a mechanistic cosmogony; therefore, why not build a new physics which has spirit as its starting point?[28]

The axis of evolution passes through man.[29] The primary evolutionary effort of the world is visibly concentrated in him.[30] The emergence of the hominians is the only new appearance in nature in the last two million years. Man is evolution.[31] He is at once the player, the cards and the stakes.[32] Nothing can go on without him. It is he who makes history meaningful.[33]

---

[24] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," FM, p. 264.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 18.

[27] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 281.

[28] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 18.

[29] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 73.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 232.

The world must be understood from above rather than below, contrary to the usual progression of scientific explanation. The synthesis which has been gradually brought about by life appears most unstable. Yet evolution advances in the direction of these improbable, fragile, complex constructions, never to retreat.[34] He predicted, "When all the rest, being concentrated or dissipated, will have passed, Spirit will remain."[35] Man, the most complex of nature's observable phenomena, is the key to understanding the less complex phenomena (all the rest of nature).

Man represents the culmination of the total movement of matter and life.[36] However, Teilhard's view differs from the old anthropocentric view according to which man is the static geometric center of the world.

---

[32] Ibid., p. 230. [33] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 15.

[34] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 26. In PM, pp. 42-43, Teilhard said: "From the aspect of energy, renewed by radio-active phenomena, material corpuscles may now be treated as transient reservoirs of concentrated power. Though never found in a state of purity, but always more or less granulated (even in light) energy nowadays represents for science the most primitive form of universal stuff. Hence we find our minds instinctively tending to represent energy as a kind of homogeneous, primordial flux in which all that has shape in the world is but a series of fleeting 'vortices'. From this point of view, the universe would find its stability in a final unity at the end of its decomposition. It would be held together from below.

Let us keep the discoveries and indisputable measurements of physics. But let us not become bound and fettered to the perspective of final equilibrium that they seem to suggest. A more complete study of the movements of the world will oblige us, little by little, to turn it upside down; in other words, to discover that if things hold and hold together, it is only by reason of complexity, from above."

[36] Teilhard de Chardin, "We Must Save Mankind," Cahier I, p. 50.

He considered that "the human phenomenon is a supremely characteristic form of the cosmic phenomenon."[37] This view, he judged, has a incalculable moral range. It transforms man's values and guarantees the permanence of the work which is being done through man's agency.[38] Man is not the center of the universe, as was once thought. He is "the arrow pointing the way to the final unification of the world in terms of life."[39] He is uniquely "the last-born, the freshest, the most complicated, the most subtle of all the successive layers of life."[40] This is Teilhard's fundamental vision of man.

He suggests that there are two unique points in The Phenomenon of Man. First, life is a universal function of the cosmos. Second, he attributed to the appearance in man of the power of reflection the value of a "change of state," or a "threshold."[41] In defense of this second point, he said:

> This affirmation is far from being an unwarranted assumption or based initially on any metaphysics of thought. It is a choice depending experimentally on the curiously underestimated fact that, from the threshold of reflection onwards, we are at what is nothing less than a new form of biological existence. . . .[42]

This new form is characterized by (1) the emergence in individual life of factors of invention above those of external arrangement which utilize the play of chance, (2) the appearance of genuine elements of attraction and repulsion which replace the false attractions and repulsions of pre-life or lower forms of life, and (3) the emergence of a demand within each conscious center for unlimited survival.[43]

---

[37] Ibid. [38] Ibid. [39] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 224.

[40] Ibid. [41] Ibid., p. 303. [42] Ibid. [43] Ibid., pp. 303-304.

He elaborated on the third point, adding:

> That is to say, the passage, for life, from a state of relative irreversibility (the physical impossibility of the cosmic involution to stop, once it has begun) to a state of absolute irreversibility (the radical dynamic incompatibility of a certain prospect of total death with the continuation of an evolution that has become reflective).[44]

Man's research is being led along an irresistible path toward the creation of a science of human energetics, beyond all contemporary physics, biology and psychology.[45] "It is in the course of that creation," he concluded, "that science, by being led to concentrate on man, will find itself increasingly face to face with religion."[46]

Evolution after man's appearance. Evolution reflects on itself in man. It becomes, therefore, conscious of itself; and, at the same time, it also becomes capable to some extent of directing and accelerating itself.[47] The crude mechanical laws of selection should be rejected at the level of man.[48] With his appearance came the predominance of freedom over chance.[49] With evolution's crossing of the threshold into the noosphere, the older chromosomic heredity is now accompanied and paralleled by an educational and extra-individual heredity; and, added Teilhard, "the preservation and accumulation of the acquired suddenly assumes an importance in biogenesis of the first order."[50] Indeed, the world is based on freedom;[51] and this becomes more apparent in the appearance and progress of man. Evolution is in process of charging itself with a continuously growing measure of freedom.[52] There is an upper goal which directs the progress of evolution and, therefore, the progress of hominization.[53] The upper goal directs it towards increasingly more freedom.[54]

---

[44] Ibid., p. 304. [45] Ibid., p. 283. [46] Ibid.

[47] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 254.

[48] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 268. See also "The Natural Units of Humanity," VP, p. 213, where he said: "As a palaeontologist I cannot harbour any illusions concerning the fact of biological competition or the inexorable forms that it takes. But by the same token I absolutely refuse brutally to translate the mechanical laws of selection into the human field. For if nature clearly teaches us that there is a universal struggle for life, it teaches us no less categorically that, passing from one platform of existence to another, living properties survive only by transformation or transposition. Mutual exploitation and suppression may be the rule among subhuman zoological groups because these are continually supplanting and diverging from one another. In the case of the human bundle, on the other hand, if by our hypothesis it can only progress further by convergence. Brotherly emulation must take the place of hostile competition within it, and war has no more sense except in relation to dangers or conquests outside humanity."

As the process of hominization continues, man will increasingly direct his own evolution.[55] Human freedom has both a place and a function in the infallible evolutionary advance.[56] The process of hominization will be a long one; and a million years in the future man will be more secure than any other branch that has appeared on the tree of life.

---

[49] Teilhard de Chardin, "On the Probable Coming of an 'Ultra-humanity'," FM, p. 270.

[50] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 87.

[51] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 110-111.

[52] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 72.

[53] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 79.

[54] On the idea of human orthogenesis, see, among other references, his essays, "Zoological Evolution and Invention," and "Hominization and Speciation," VP.

[55] Garrigan, op. cit., p. 35, suggests, on the physical level, that there is a growing possibility that genetic manipulation by man is very near.

[56] See Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 307-308, where he concluded that the success of hominization is directly tied to the factor of human freedom. Its success is not a certainty. For further elaboration of this topic, see his "The Grand Option," FM, pp. 37-60, and "L'Heure de choisir," AE, pp. 17-26.

The appearance of man is related directly to the complexity of his nervous system, his brain. His spiritual superiority is inseparable from his neurophysiological complexity. In the future he will come to understand more fully the mechanisms of reproduction, embryogenesis and selection. Subsequently, he will manipulate these in such a way that individuals, as well as all mankind, will be increasingly cerebralized by directed selection as well as by natural selection.[57] Man is a creative partner with God; and his creative activity is essentially religious in nature.

A total, or substantial, reversal of hominization is structurally irreconcilable with man's auto-evolution, since a boundless hope of survival is necessary for it to function.[58] Human phylogenesis will not end suddenly. Such a position is biologically unviable. "The only scientifically conceivable form for the ultimate phase of the vitalising process in which we are at present engaged," said Teilhard is a lecture at the Sorbonne in 1951, is that of a critical transformation.[59] At the hidden point of man's origin, there was a critical point of individual reflection. Teilhard posited a second critical point of reflection and cerebration which is also hidden, but towards which we are continuously drifting. It involves all mankind; and it is, said Teilhard:

---

[57] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 254-255. He recognized the many dangers involved in the manipulation of such power. He also felt there was a justifiable repulsion and unrest caused by such a theory. However, he suggested, in the first place, that nothing can prevent man from exploring in every direction to the limits of his ability to research and invent. Secondly, he suggested that the parallel development of new psychological characteristics is most likely necessary for the structure of man's self-evolution to be physically realizable.

[58] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 170.

[59] Ibid.

> A critical point beyond which we would be unable to distinguish anything as a phenomenon since, by the very fact that it forms a threshold of irreversibility, it coincides with an emergence from the structures and dimensions of evolution.[60]

Scientifically, he could see no other end for the phenomenon of man. He noted, "A strange vision, no doubt, this vision of a universe in which each thinking planet would represent, at its term, by concentration of its Noosphere, a point of penetration and escape from the temporo-spatial envelope of things."[61] Yet modern physics has taught us, he observed, that on the cosmic scale, "only the fantastic has chance of being true."[62]

Man and covergence. It is man's divergence from other men, from the highest level down to the family and the individuals which compose it, which is the cause of human conflict.[63] However, in man the initial stage of widening divergence is transformed into a final stage of increasing convergence. He said:

> Whereas, one might say, that the animal lines dispersed broadly over a field without curves, human lines behave as if compelled to develop on a sphere. Springing from a lower pole (the pole at which they appear), their verticil spreads at first like a cluster of meridian rings mounting towards an equator. But this movement of dispersal, in the course of which forms differentiate, in only the prelude to a reverse movement which will bring

---

[60] Ibid., p. 171. [61] Ibid. [62] Ibid.

[63] Teilhard de Chardin, "Faith in Peace," FM, p. 151.

> together in the upper hemisphere the elements born and consolidated along the course between the poles and make them react on one another in an organically constructed unity. The divergence is preserved, with the perfections it has brought to each branch in isolation; but it is increasingly overcome by a force of convergence which transforms the endless fragmentation in which the unity seemed likely to disappear into a further means of progress. Multiplication develops and completes itself by synthesis.[64]

Therefore, on the level of man, the characteristics of living beings are transformed--"animal consciousness becoming reflective consciousness; sexuality, love; curiosity, science; inarticulate sounds, language; association, culture."[65] Also, the mechanism of biological evolution begins to change. After the synthesis of individuals, there is a synthesis of groups. This is a phenomenon unknown in the past; and we are incapable of measuring it.[66] Teilhard considered the concept of human convergence as revolutionary as that of biological evolution or a revolving earth.[67] His hypothesis that a human confluence is taking place was validated in his mind by the belief that it is coherent with the facts.[68] For him, the process presently developing on earth is the formation of a synthesized human type.[69]

In man, said Teilhard, "education is nothing less than an essential and natural form of biological addivity."[70] In him we can see that heredity passes beyond the individual and enters into a collective phase, becoming social.[71] Because of the phenomenon of convergence within mankind, peace is a strong possibility.[72] Teilhard was aware of the many historical, moral, and scientific arguments against this contention.[73] All these reasons for scepticism were nullified in his view by the unique structure of the human zoological group. In man evolution is rebounding upon itself; it is converging! For this reason, the nature of the problem is changed. In considering the future of humanity, the simple projection of the history of the animal world (or of the first few millenia of man's history) into the future is inadequate. Survival is no longer contingent upon man's supplanting of his fellow man, because converging branches survive by uniting rather than by eliminating each other. Thus, from Teilhard's point of view, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that mankind, by its very structure, cannot fail ultimately to achieve peace, in spite of all contrary appearances. Peace is a strong probability. It will come in the course of time. The "peace" of which he spoke is, he said:

---

[64] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Natural Units of Humanity," VP, p. 207.

[65] Ibid. [66] Ibid., p. 208. [67] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 321.

[68] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Natural Units of Humanity," VP, p. 211. For further elaboration on the idea of man's convergence, see PM, p. 209; "The Planetisation of Mankind," FM, pp. 128 and 133; "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 227; "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 69.

[69] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Natural Units of Humanity," VP, p. 208.

[70] Teilhard de Chardin, "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, p. 29.

> Only a peace . . . which will allow, express and correspond to what I have called the vital in-folding of Mankind upon itself. A sustained state of growing convergence and concentration, a great organised endeavour: if it is not that kind of peace, then what I have been saying is worthless and we are back with our uncertainties. This means that all hope of bourgeois tranquility, the dreams of 'millennary' felicity in which we may be tempted to indulge, must be washed out, eliminated from our horizon. A perfectly-ordered society with everyone living in

---

[71] _Ibid_. [72] Teilhard de Chardin, "Faith in Peace," _FM_, p. 150.

[73] See _Ibid_., where he briefly elaborates on these arguments.

> effortless ease within a fixed framework, a world in a state of tranquil repose, all this has nothing to do with our advancing Universe, apart from the fact that it would rapidly induce a state of deadly tedium.[74]

The ultimate concord of man is a biological necessity. However, he contended, it must take the form of some kind of tense cohesion permeated and inspired by the energies which have been, and are now, wasted in bloodshed--"unanimity in search of conquest, sustained among us by the universal resolve to raise ourselves upwards, all straining shoulder to shoulder, towards ever greater heights of consciousness and freedom."[75] The true peace which is biologically probable is characterized neither by the ending nor the renewal of warfare, but is, he said, "war in a naturally sublimated form."[76]

For Teilhard, a faith in peace is possible and justifiable only in a world which is dominated by a faith in the future, and a faith in man and his progress.[77] He noted:

> When I look for reassurance as to our future, I do not turn to official utterances, or 'pacifist' manifestations, or conscientious objectors. I turn instinctively towards the ever more numerous institutions and associations of men where in the search for knowledge a new spirit is silently taking shape around us--the soul of Mankind resolved at all costs to achieve, in its total integrity, the uttermost fulfilment of its powers and its destiny.[78]

The development of a spiritual cohesion within humanity is taking place. The acceleration of this process will not result from a general elevation of the world's standard of living, but, he said, from "a fusing action exercised from within, on the multitude of thinking beings, by the ultimate focus of their co-reflexion."[79] That "focus of their co-reflexion," point Omega, he later identified with the cosmic Christ.

---

[74] Ibid., p. 153. [75] Ibid. [76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., p. 154. [78] Ibid.

Success of hominization. Teilhard was disturbed as he observed the great quantity of unused human energy. This energy, he believed, is growing because of the increased work done by machines; and this growth is destined to accelerate as the result of the harnessing of atomic energy.[80] The result of this vast, growing quantity of unused energy within and around us, in spite of outward appearances, is boredom.[81]

Mankind faces a dilemma in choosing between optimism and pessimism. No tangible evidence is available on either side. The pessimistic choice is one in favor of the stifling of thought in an abortive and absurd universe. However, said Teilhard, "in support of hope, there are rational invitations to an act of faith."[82] The optimistic alternative is, he said, that "an opening exists--that of the super-soul above our souls; but in that case the way out . . . must open freely onto limitless psychic spaces in a universe to which we can unhesitatingly entrust ourselves."[83] The latter choice is weighted with logic, as well as the promise of a world in evolution. In the last analysis, the best assurance that a thing will happen is that it appear necessary.[84] To bring mankind into existence, he said, the world "has from the beginning juggled miraculously with too many improbabilities for there to be any risk whatever in committing ourselves further and following it right to the end."[85]

---

[79] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 261.

[80] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Spiritual Repercussions of the Atom Bomb," FM, p. 146.

[81] Ibid. [82] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 233.

[83] Ibid. [84] Ibid., p. 234.

The basic barrier to the success of hominization is that created by the disuse of human energy. In order to activate that energy, to release vast reserves which would otherwise remain dormant, it is necessary for something to be anticipated. A faith must be involved.[86] Man must have a faith in the future and a taste for action. The ultimate answer to the question of the success of hominization must necessarily be found, he said, "in a fusing action exercised from within, on the multitude of thinking beings, by the ultimate focus of their co-reflexion."[87] The continued existence of mankind depends upon its ability to organize increasingly and more tightly upon itself.[88] Man is presently involved in a radical change of climate. This must be finally accepted. He said:

> Human problem No. 1 is no longer that of deciding whether we can escape the socio-physical in-folding of the human race upon itself, since this is irrevocably imposed on us by the physico-chemical structure of the Earth. All that matters, the only meaningful question, is to know whither this process of totalisation is leading us--towards what summit, or what abyss?[89]

---

[85] Ibid., p. 233.

[86] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 260.

[87] Ibid., p. 261.

[88] Teilhard de Chardin, "Does Mankind Move Biologically upon Itself?," FM, p. 249.

[89] Ibid.

From a phenomenological point of view, the cosmic energy of involution is influenced by chance at the bottom of the process and freedom at the top. He added:

> In the case of very large numbers (such, for instance, as the human population) the process tends to 'unfallibilise' itself, inasmuch as the likelihood of success grows on the lower side (chance) while that of rejection and error diminishes on the other side (freedom) with the multiplication of the elements engaged.[90]

From a Christian point of view, he observed, "the final success of hominisation (and thus cosmic involution) is positively guaranteed by the 'redeeming virtue' of the God incarnate in his creation."[91] However, the Christian position takes one beyond the limits of phenomenology.[92]

Individual men are inwardly polarized towards an Omega Point, which is the focal point of the converging evolutionary process. Consequently, they will rectify themselves as they move in that direction. " It is reasoned calculation," he said, "not speculation, which makes me ready to lay odds on the ultimate triumph of hominisation over all the vicissitudes threatening its progress.[93]

Teilhard expressed his belief in the ultimate success of hominization in tentative terms. However, he believed it highly probable.[94] Man will reach his goal because the world is not absurd.

---

[90] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 308. See also his "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 236, where he spoke of the infallibility of large numbers."

[91] Ibid. [92] Ibid.

[93] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 237.

[94] Ibid., pp. 307-308.

As the leading shoot of the tree of life, and, therefore, of evolution, mankind could not end short of its goal without a self-abortion of the universe. Such an occurrence would make the world absurd. By virtue of his position, man is irreplaceable. He is necessary to the process. Therefore, though it seems improbable, "he must reach the goal, not necessarily, doubtless, but infallibly,"[95] he said. We should not expect a halt in the progress of hominization in the future. Rather, we should ultimately expect to see a maturation and a paroxysm leading progressively towards and into the improbable from which we have come.[96]

Man is still young and fresh, organically speaking. He still has millions of years to grow and develop.[97] His present situation is energetically unstable, both physically and psychically. Mankind is moving beyond the individual towards a collectivity, or some kind of higher mankind, above our heads. All this is taking place within the "cone of time" and in accord with its terms and requirements.[98] The world is in process of being born. It is not a world that is. Contrary to the existentialists, life is not a state, but a vast, directed process inseparably bound up with, and secured in, the very structure of the evolving universe.[99]

---

[95] Teilhard de Chardin, FM, p. 276. [96] Ibid.

[97] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 71.

[98] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, pp. 88-89.

[99] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 227.

Faith in man. Teilhard once said, "At Rome they see neither the timeliness nor the reliability of an apologetics based on faith in man. For the Church, the only thing that makes an assured future worth while is eternal life."[100] In 1947, he wrote George Barbour of his struggle with the problem of how to introduce "faith in man" into Christianity.[101] In 1949, he wrote of the urgent need to choose between Christianizing neo-humanism or condemning it.[102] In an address to the French section of the World Congress of Faiths in 1947, he defined "faith in man" as:

> the more or less active and fervent conviction that Mankind as an organic and organised whole possesses a future: a future consisting not merely of successive years but of higher states to be achieved by struggle. Not merely survival, . . . but some form of higher life or super-life.[103]

The history of mythology and folklore reveals the deep-rooted desire of Earth to find its way to Heaven. We may, then legitimately accept that there is a general and implicit faith of man in man which is older than civilization, and which, he said, "constitutes the basic impulse forming all our past history."[104] This primitive faith, in its modern, collective form, represents a new attitude in the world, and deserves our specific attention. The primitive, childlike, instinctive faith in man has developed into a mature stage of constructive and militant faith in mankind.[105] Teilhard disregarded what he considered the superficial chaos of his day as the groaning of a new world in process of being born. The obvious ills of the world are primarily growing pains. What appears to be merely a hunger for material well-being is actually a hunger for higher being. The spirit of mankind has abruptly come alive with the awareness of what remains to be done if the fulfilment of its powers and potentialities is to be achieved.[106] The modern upsurge of human faith is a life-bearing, irresistible phenomenon. However, we should not passively and indiscriminately allow ourselves to be borne on the tide. "The more youthful and forceful the energy," he observed, "the more misguided and dangerous may be its ebullience."[107]

---

[100] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 271, citing Teilhard.

[101] Barbour, op. cit., p. 115. [102] Cuenot, loc. cit.

[103] Teilhard de Chardin, "Faith in Man," FM, p. 185.

[104] Ibid., p. 186. [105] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

For Teilhard, a legitimate faith in man must include the worship of One who is higher than man.[108] However, modern man is tempted to look for the One who is higher than man in man himself, seeing man as self-sufficient and autonomous, and as the master of his own destiny. This is a temptation as old as the earth itself, one which is reflected in the experiences of the Titans, Prometheus, Babel and Faust--and of Christ on the mountain. It raised its ugly head with the first appearance of self-consciousness. The critical phase of this temptation is now being entered. It comes with man's self-elevation to the point of some understanding of the immensity of time that lies ahead of him, and the almost unlimited powers placed at his disposal through collective efforts to grasp the material springs of the universe.

Teilhard was quite aware of the dilemma for the Christian. He observed:

> At the present time a fundamental inner impulse, newly born in our hearts, is tending to find a dual, a divergent,

---

[106] *Ibid.*, p. 187. [107] *Ibid.* [108] *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

> expression in two apparently incompatible spiritual forms; on the one hand, the spirit (let us call it 'Christian') of sacrifice and of union centered in the expectation of an Apotheosis in the future; and on the other hand the Promenthean or Faustian spirit of self-worship based on the material organisation of the earth. The ambiguity is there.[109]

At the present moment in history, the initiative in the progress of Life seems to be with the material and tangible aspect; thus, the Promenthean faith appears the only valid one. Man runs the risk of seeing no other faith in the service of the world. Therefore, the defenders of the Spirit tend to reject the irrepressible hunger for growth and conquest, and the confident sense of power and progress, which surge in the breast of man, as among the most appalling and threatening manifestations of pride. Teilhard suggested, however, that one must not jump to conclusions, since "ambiguity is not perversity but only the danger of perversion."[110] He attempted to understand faith in man, in its pre-Promethian or pre-Christian state, that is, at a level below the focus where the dilemma appears to be fixing itself in two discordant forms.

Modern mankind is experiencing an urgent need to unite. Everywhere there is a tendency towards unification. Men are looking for something that will draw them together either above or below the level of that which divides them. To discover the principle of union, should we look downward to our common interest or upwards to our common faith?

We should not underestimate the significance of the cohesive power of common interest; however, this remains a fragile basis for genuine union. It is at best only temporary and accidental. In addition, that which coheres because of necessity or fear hangs together only

---

[109] *Ibid*., pp. 188-189. [110] *Ibid*., p. 189.

23

outwardly and superficially. It is only through an inward impulse that the unity of mankind can endure and grow. For this impulse to be brought about, a basic, common aspiration must exist. At this point, one must proceed with great care, for any abstract scheme, any formulation of a common view of the world, will tend to resolve the ambiguity of the future in an arbitrary and premature manner. It runs the risk of restricting the movement of genuine unification to a specific direction. This is undesirable, because it is precisely out of the movement as such that unification must emerge.

Of the two extremes which face the world today, the Marxist and the Christian, each is obviously convinced of its own particular position. However, each is basically inspired with an equal faith in man. It is also incontestable that both the Christian and the Marxist, "to the extent that he believes (and sees the other believe) in the future of the world, feels a basic human sympathy for the other,"[111] said Teilhard. This sympathy has its basis in the dim recognition that they are moving in the same direction and that they will eventually, in some way, converge on the same summit.[112] He concluded:

> Faith in Man, by the combined effect of its universality and its elemental quality, shows itself upon examination to be the general atmosphere in which the higher, more elaborated forms of faith which we all hold in one way or another may best (indeed _can only_) grow and come together. It is not a _formula_, it is the _environment_ of union.
>
> No one can doubt that we are all more or less affected by this elementary, primordial faith. Should we otherwise truly belong to our time? And if, through the very force of our spiritual aspirations, we have been inclined to mistrust it, even to feel that we

---

[111] _Ibid._, p. 191. [112] _Ibid._, p. 192.

> are immune from it, we must look more closely into our own hearts. I have said that the soul has only one summit. It has also only one foundation. Let us look well and we shall find that our Faith in God, detached as it may be, sublimates in us a rising tide of human aspiration. It is to this original sap that we must return if we wish to communicate with the brothers with whom we seek to be united.[113]

It was Teilhard's conviction, contrary to many Christians, that human nature changes.[114] In his vision and approach to the world, it is impossible for man to be the same in the future as he is today. There is only one psychological axis of progression towards God;[115] and that one runs through man. Man is moving towards a stage of ultra-hominization. Though only in an embryonic stage, he represents the most advanced level in the growth of Spirit in the world.[116] He is the key, therefore, to any valid understanding of the universe. "It is by that which we have of the most incommunicably personal," said Teilhard, "that we touch the Universal."[117] The more man becomes man, the more he will be prepared to move towards that which is new. "Some 'absolute'," he said, 'is implied in the very play of his operative activity."[118]

Teilhard attempted to establish man's greatness by challenging the double critical threat introduced by Galileo and Darwin.[119] He sought to give him a certain dignity and to instil within him a zest for life, a taste for action, and an indominable optimism. Only with such a spirit, he believed, can man become more human and more personal, and the natural consummation of evolution be achieved.

---

[113] Ibid.

[114] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, pp. 252-253.

[115] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 8. [116] Ibid., p. 19.

[117] Ibid., p. 8. [118] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 232.

[119] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 155.

Teilhardian man is not Promethean man. Rather, he is the arrowhead of evolution, involved in a process of growing unification through the attractive power of love. Man is moving towards ultimate union with Omega, whom Teilhard will later equate with the cosmic Christ, the source of love.

II. THE EMERGENCE OF THOUGHT

The birth of thought. Scientists have long agreed in acknowledging the zonal composition of the earth. The central metallic sphere is the barysphere. It is surrounded by the concentric, rocky lithosphere, which is in turn surrounded by the hydrosphere and the atmosphere. A fifth sphere, composed of all the flora and fauna of the earth, is a living membrane, the biosphere.[120] Outside and above the biosphere is the noonsphere, the sphere of thought.[121]

The noosphere is the sphere of man. His appearance and the emergence of thought were one and the same event. When the proper critical point was reached within the biosphere, the threshold of reflection was passed. A change of state resulted in a change of nature. Man appeared; and he was different from all the rest of creation because of the introduction of reflection.[122] The noosphere is superimposed upon and coextensive with the biosphere.[123] Teilhard's first use of the term "noosphere" was about 1923.[124] He indicated that the term was derived from noos, mind, and represents the thinking sphere of substance.[125]

---

[120] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 182. [121] _Ibid_.

[122] _Ibid_., p. 166. See also p. 163, where Teilhard pointed out that it is the element of reflection which gives man superiority over the animals. He also criticized much of present day science for its approach to mind as an epiphenomenon of brain. By taking such a stance,

The rise of consciousness represents the axis of cosmogenesis.[126] Teilhard believed that no reality could continue increasing without eventually reaching a critical point involving a change of state.[127] Evolution is a progress towards thought. Man is evolution which has become conscious of itself.[128] He has a consciousness raised to the second power. He not only knows; he knows that he knows.[129]

---

science has ignored a whole dimension of the universe. According to Teilhard's law of Complexity/Consciousness, consciousness is the product of the arrangement and centration of matter. It is a phenomenon which must be considered with the rest of the phenomena of the universe. The progression from consciousness to human consciousness depends on the development of an organ which can perfect consciousness--the brain.

[123] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, pp. 80-81.

[124] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 63.

[125] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 157, note 2.

[126] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 228.

[127] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 152. For vivid descriptions of events leading up to the threshold of thought, see PM, pp. 160, 168-169; "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 220.

[128] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 221.

[129] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 224. See also "Hominization and Speciation," VP, p. 261; PM, p. 165, where he defined reflection as "the power acquired by consciousness to turn in upon itself, to take possession of itself as of an object endowed with its own particular consistence and value: no longer merely to know, but to know oneself; no longer merely to know, but to know that one knows."

Thought is the central phenomenon of vitalization.[130] Teilhard suggested that "the 'phyla' possessing higher psychic attributes have absorbed all the forces at Life's disposal."[131] Therefore, the biosphere is understood only through an understanding of the noosphere.[132] Man is the key to understanding the universe.

The development of the noosphere. Teilhard concluded, "the only reality in the world is the passion to grow."[133] An irresistible rise of thought is im progress in the universe.[134] It is irreversible.[135] For it to be otherwise would make the whole evolutionary process absurd. Consequently, the standard for measuring the speed and degree of evolution is the degree of consciousness found within it.[136] The classification of living beings should be along the lines of cerebralization, or the complexity of the nervous system.[137] The fact, an understanding of the nervous system is a key to understanding the law of complexity/

---

[130] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 218.

[131] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 15.

[132] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 67.

[133] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, pp. 20-21.

[134] Teilhard de Chardin, "On the Probable Coming of an 'Ultra-humanity'," FM p. 272.

[135] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 169.

[136] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 218.

[137] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 144.

consciousness.[138] The idea of noogenesis, "the psychic infolding of the earth upon itself, in the bosom of some new 'space of complexity' . . .," said Teilhard, will be generally accepted within two or three generations.[139] He concluded:

> Our picture is of mankind labouring under the impulsion of an obscure instinct, so as to break out through its narrow point of emergence and submerge the earth; of thought becoming number so as to conquer all habitable space, taking precedence over all other forms of life; of mind, in other words, deploying and convoluting the layers of the noosphere. This effort at multiplication and organic expansion is, for him who can see, the summing up and final expression of human pre-history and history, from the earliest beginnings down to the present day.[140]

The human being in man begins in each new generation at a higher turn of the upward moving spiral towards greater consciousness. The world is increasingly more orderly and better understood--orthogenetically.[141] With the passage of time, an acquired human psychism is being constantly erected. Within this structure we are born, and live and grow. It represents an immense, collective past which is being collectively organized.[142] In man, evolution rebounds reflectively upon itself. Teilhard suggested, "the Darwinian era of survival by Natural Selection (the vital thrust) is thus succeeded by a Lamarckian era of Super-Life brought about by calculated invention (the vital impulse)."[143] Before the appearance of man, natural selection determined the course of morphogenesis and cerebration. Since his appearance, the power of invention has increasingly assumed the reins of evolution.[144] Through the process of education, there is a transmission of acquired characteristics.[145] Education has become an integral part of biological heredity.[146] Through education, heredity becomes social.[147] The power of reflection is incomplete when restricted to the individual. Teilhard noted, "However personal and incommunicable it may be at its root and origin, Reflection can only be developed in communion with others. It is essentially a social phenomenon."[148] The individual cannot fulfil himself in isolation. He requires a relation to other men to uncover his own depth and wholeness. Because of the association between men, there is an augmentation of consciousness.[149] Therefore, said Teilhard, science has a basis for recognizing "another phenomenon of a reflective nature co-extensive with the whole of mankind."[150]

---

[138] Teilhard de Chardin, "Life and the Planets," FM, pp. 111-112.

[139] Teilhard de Chardin, "Does Mankind Move Biologically upon Itself?," FM, p. 259.

[140] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 191.

[141] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, pp. 243-244.

[142] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 92.

The noosphere, planetized humanity, represents the most complex sphere in the universe. Within it, a network of economic, psychic affiliations is being woven at a progressively increasing rate. It envelops the individual and penetrates ever more deeply within him. As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult to act and think other than collectively.[151] Teilhard saw on the horizon "a collection of the whole of humanity, reflecting on itself."[152] For him, "the growth of the noosphere is necessarily directed toward some point of maturation."[153] Significantly, he believed, if we are to regard the world as meaningful and harmonious, "we are entitled to attribute the value of experimental and physical reality to everything . . . which shows itself to be a necessary condition for the preservation and heightening in Man of his powers of invention and purposive thinking."[154] This is in keeping with his contention that the best guarantee that a thing will happen is that it be necessary.

---

[143] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 212.

[144] Teilhard de Chardin, "From the Pre-human to the Ultra-human," FM, p. 293.

[145] Teilhard de Chardin, "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, pp. 26, 28-29.

[146] Ibid., p. 31. [147] Ibid., pp. 29, 31.

[148] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Planetisation of Mankind," FM, p.133.

[149] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 178. [150] Ibid.

The ascent of evolution, counterbalancing entropy, moves toward levels of greater improbability and personality.[155] Therefore, it may be said that the universe is acquiring a personality.[156] It is moving towards a supreme, personal Center. For Teilhard, the highest consciousness replaces entropy as the essential physical function of the world. For him, the evolutionary process is tumbling:

---

[151] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 170.

[152] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 162.

[153] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 113.

[154] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 201.

[155] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 79.

[156] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 79.

> forward and upward upon the spiritual; and this inversion of cosmogony has the consequence of giving a cosmic consistency to the centres of consciousness--to the monads: this personal treasure, the centre within every soul, is imperishable, and the supreme Centre must be both lovable and loving.[157]

It is becoming more apparent that ethical principles are necessary for the survival of the human race. In other words, he said, "Evolution, in rebounding reflectively upon itself, acquires morality for the purpose of its further advance."[158] He noted:

> The pursuit of human knowledge cannot be carried in concrete terms beyond a certain stage without this power of reflective arrangement becoming automatically charged with internal obligations which curb and direct it; while at the same time . . . it engenders around itself an entirely new atmosphere of spiritual needs.[159]

Evolution becomes interiorized and is given purpose in man. Simultaneously, he observed, "in the degree in which the strivings of human inventiveness need to be controlled in their operation and sustained in their energies, it imposes upon itself a moral order and 'mysticises' itself."[160] The development of the noosphere is a mixed blessing. A price is paid for each advance. The appearance of egoism and the fragmentation of consciousness, opposing the convergence of consciousness in a personal Center, come with the development of self-consciousness.[161]

---

[157] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 151.

[158] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 204.

[159] Ibid. [160] Ibid., p. 212.

[161] Christopher E. Fullman and Henry J.-J. D'Aoust, "The Energetics of Love," The World of Teilhard, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 151.

The tools of man which extend thought. Man's tools allow him to progress without changing form. They allow his psychism to vary infinitely without altering his zoological type. In order to appreciate the true zoological value of man, the "natural" should not be separated as absolutely from the "artificial" as it often is.[162] Mechanization has facilitated and multiplied man's activities. It has relieved him of a heavy burden of physical and mental work. Also, Teilhard observed, "by the miraculous enchancing of our senses, through its powers of enlargement, penetration and exact measurement, it constantly increases the scope and clarity of our perceptions."[163] The development of tools such as roods, railroads, airplanes, the press and radio results in much more than our amusement, the development of commerce or the spread of ideas. In all these developments, he said, "we are quite simply continuing on a higher plane and by other means, the uninterrupted work of biological evolution."[164]

Teilhard was quite interested in the field of cybernetics during the latter years of his life. In 1953, he said, "What really interests me in cybernetics is the transformation of materialism it suggests to us. A machine is not (or is no longer) an affair primarily of energy set in motion; but of information put together and transmitted."[165]

---

[162] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 57.

[163] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 229.

[164] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 60.

[165] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 253, quoting a letter by Teilhard dated May 15, 1953.

Man's tools are the equivalent of specialized organs in the animal series. He noted, "the power of invention corresponds to the thing invented. And we see immediately, as through an open breach, psychic energies invading the domain of transformism from within."[166] Man's use of tools is a transformed extension and a superior aspect of his natural activities.[167]

The consummation of thought. Teilhard's favorite image for depicting the upward rise of the evolutionary process was that of a cone. Moving upward as though on the inner surface of a hollow cone, the layers of matter tighten and converge in thought until the summit, point Omega, is reached.[168] He also used an equally graphic image specifically to picture the development of the moosphere:

> Supposing we imagine, inside a solid comparable to our terrestrial globe, a wave starting from the South Pole and rising up towards the North Pole. Taken over its whole course the wave in question advances in a curved and therefore 'converging' medium: and yet at the same time, during the first half of its passage (as far, that is, as the Equator) it is spreading outwards; beyond that point, however, it begins to contract upon itself. Well, then: if we follow the historical development of the noosphere, we may truthfully say that it seems to conform to an exactly similar rhythm.[169]

Since the Upper Quaternary period, by which time modern man had physically emerged, he suggested, evolution has "overtly overflowed its anatomical modalities to spread, or perhaps even to transplant its main thrust into the zones of psychic spontaneity both individual and collective."[170] Generally speaking, human beings have the ability to unite, through many interconnections, or links, in such a way as to compose a single All, "in which, by way of reflexion, each element is conscious of its aggregation to all the rest."[172] Humanity is building a composite brain before our eyes. Through a biological deepening of the movement which is attracting humanity toward a single Pole, humanity will find its heart. The constructive developments within the noosphere must necessarily penetrate to the sphere of feeling of the powers of humanity for unification are ever to be achieved.[173] A brain of brains is surely developing within the noosphere; yet, it is impossible to know the modes or appearances it might adopt. Teilhard noted, "All that we can say of it is that, in this absolutely new (and therefore unimaginable) type of bio-synthesis individual liberties can only be imagined as carried to their maximum by the very play of their mutual association."[174] For him, man represents a unique species which irresistibly tends to be drawn together both materially and psychologically, forming "in the strict biological sense a single super-organism of a definite nature."[175] Anticipating attendance at a congress of thinkers which occurred in 1955, he wrote: "I hope to take advantage of the congress to insist on the 'energetic and scientific' necessity of envisaging the existence of some point of emergence into the 'super-conscious' at the natural term of human co-reflection."[176] Within the noosphere, the process of noogenesis leads from reflection to co-reflection, and finally to ultra-reflection.[177]

---

[166] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 71. [167] Ibid.

[168] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942", FM, p. 88.

[169] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 81.

---

[170] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 203.

[171] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 18.

[172] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, p. 60.

[173] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 178.

[174] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, pp. 229-230.

[175] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization and Speciation," VP, p. 265.

The movement of evolution into the psychic levels of the world gives primacy to the spiritual aspect of life. Teilhard insisted:

> The very act by which the fine edge of our minds penetrates the absolute is a phenomenon, as it were, of emergence. In short, first recognised only at a single point, then perforce extended to the whole inorganic and organic volume of matter, evolution is now, whether we like it or not, gaining the psychic zones of the world and transferring to the spiritual constructions of life not only the cosmic stuff but also the cosmic 'primacy' hitherto reserved by science to the tangled whirlwind of the ancient 'ether'.[178]

Since the appearance of man, particularly modern man, consciousness has been in process of forming an autonomous, spiritual principle.[179] When the noosphere finally closes in upon itself, a change of state will occur in a psychical, not a spatial, direction.[180] Human history develops between individual and collective points of reflection, inferior and superior, respectively. Taken as a whole, at the collective point of reflection, mankind will be forced, said Teilhard,

---

[176] Cuenot, op. cit., citing Teilhard.

[177] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 209.

[178] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 220-221.

[179] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM p. 209.

[180] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 287.

"to abandon its organo-planetary foothold so as to shift its centre on to the transcendent centre of its increasing concentration. This will be the end and the fulfilment of the spirit of the earth."[181]

Noogenesis takes place only as the mind is able to embrace the hope of achieving a supreme consummation. It has a goal. Otherwise, the whole evolutionary process would be stunted, frustrated and cheated.[182] It would be absurd. The goal will be achieved because it appears necessary. The achievement of a planetary consciousness is not the ultimate goal, however. Because of new conditions imposed upon the universe by the emergence and demands of reflective thought, which has the capacity for criticizing its future and refusing to progress, said Teilhard, "men must agree that its trajectory will definitely leap forward in the direction of a supreme place of personalizing centration and consolidation."[183]

III. THE COSMIC SENSE

The significance of research. Since Teilhard defined the world as a gradual awakening of consciousness, research appeared to him as the frontier in the spreading of universal consciousness.[184] In biological terms, research is reflective groping. It is the "effort to feel our way towards the continual discovery of better biological arrangements."[185] It parallels and corresponds to the development of hominization. He noted, "It is not by chance that the number of research students and their interconnections are increasing 'exponentially' within a mankind that is in process of concentration upon itself."[186] Research is becoming the primary function of humanity.[187]

---

[181] Ibid. [182] Ibid., pp. 231-232.

[183] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 231.

[184] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 217, citing Teilhard.

[185] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 105.

The common pursuit of the same truth draws men more closely together than anything else. In fact, he said, "In the course of genesis, knowledge links together not only brains but inevitably hearts as well."[188] Taken as a whole, human energy is being organized, above each personal center, in the direction of a common human soul.[189] Life can progress only by breaking down the barriers which separate men, and by commiting itself unhesitatingly to a faith in the future.[190] He said, "The Age of Nations is past. The task before us now, if we would not perish, is to shake off our ancient prejudices, and to build the earth."[191]

Teilhard believed, contrary to the so-called realists, that a transformation of human energy is taking place which is tending neither toward rest nor war, but rather, toward the form of research.[192] The time will come for mankind when the spirit of discovery will absorb all the impetus of the spirit of war.[193] A special sense, the "cosmic sense," is being developed, which will discover for man the whole of which he is a part.[194] He defined the "cosmic sense" as "that more or less conscious affinity which binds us psychologically to the whole in which we are enveloped."[195] He used the term "sense of earth" with the same meaning.[196]

---

[186] Ibid., p. 106.

[187] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 173. He noted further: "As to the significance of this great event, I for my part can see only one way to account for it. It is that the enormous surplus of free energy released by the in-folding of the Noosphere is destined by a natural evolutionary process to flow into the construction and functioning of what I have called its 'Brain'."

[188] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 256.

[189] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 67.

[190] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Spirit of Earth," Cahier I, p. 60.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 162.

The time will come when man will be forced to admit that science is an essential activity which derives from the overflow of energy which is constantly being liberated by mechanization.[197] He suggested:

> Research is the highest human function, embracing the spirit of War and bright with the splendour of Religion. To keep up a constant pressure on the surface of the Real, is not that the supreme gesture of faith in Being, and therefore of adoration? All that is ours, if we understand how to avoid stifling within us the Spirit of Earth.
>
> Whoever wishes to be part of this spirit must die and be born again, for others and for himself. In order to reach

---

[193] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 65.

[194] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 14.

[195] Teilhard de Chardin, "Equisse d'un univers personnel," EH, p. 101.

[196] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Spirit of Earth," Cahier I, p. 57. Here he said, "The phrase 'Sense of Earth' should be understood to mean the passionate sense of common destiny which draws the thinking part of Life ever further onwards. . . . the only truly natural and real human Unity is the Spirit of Earth." See also Ibid., p. 59, where he said of the "Sense of Earth," "In isolation, men suffer and stagnate without fully realizing it; they have need of a higher impulse from without to force them from the immobility of their dead point and bring them on to the beam of their profound affinity. The Sense of Earth is the irresistible pressure which will come at the right moment to unite them in a common passion."

[197] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 279.

> this higher plane of humanity he must bring about a complete transformation in his whole sense of values and his whole action.
>
> Yet a little while and the Spirit of Earth will emerge with its specific individuality and its own character and physiogonomy. And then, on the surface of the Noosphere, gradually sublimated in thought and passion, ever striving to solve more lofty problems, to possess greater objects, *the tension towards being will be at its maximum*.[198]

There is little difference between research and adoration.[199] A spiritualizing function may be found in scientific work and research. In a converging world they are a higher form of adoration.[200] For Teilhard, notes Cuenot, "work . . . is an 'arrangement' or organization of nature: hence a spiritualizing, and so a Christifying of the earth."[201] In connection with research, work is a prayer, when it is directed towards the Christ who dwells in the heart of matter.[202]

The view of progress. Progress is directly proportional to the growth of consciousness; and the growth of consciousness is the direct result of physical arrangement or organization.[203] The time has come for deciding whether to have faith in the collective, spiritual progress of the earth. For Teilhard, this was the burning issue which faces mankind. For this reason, he said, "I feel resolutely determined to devote myself by all possible means to the defence of the idea of the reality of a progress (collective and personalising) against every secular or religious pessimism."[204] He held tenaciously to a belief in the expansion and progress of humanity. Any other position would lead ultimately to a Marxist materialism.[205] In relation to progress, he observed:

---

[198] Teilhard de Chardin, Cahier I, p. 61.

[199] Teilhard de Chardin, *PM*, p. 250.

[200] Teilhard de Chardin, "Recherche, travail et adoration," *SC*, pp. 281-289.

[201] Cuenot, *op*. *cit*., p. 374. [202] *Ibid*., p. 404.

[203] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," *FM*, p. 69.

> There are philosophers who, accepting . . . the progressive animation of the concrete by the power of thought, of Matter by Spirit, seek to build upon it the hope of a terrestrial liberation, as though the soul, become mistress of all determinisms and inertias, may someday be capable of overcoming harsh probability and vanquishing suffering and evil here on earth. Alas, it is a forlorn hope; for it seems certain that any outward upheaval or internal renovation which might suffice to transform the Universe as it is could only be a kind of death--death of the individual, death of the race, death of the Cosmos. A more realistic and more Christian view shows us Earth evolving towards a state in which Man, having come into the full possession of his sphere of action, his strength, his maturity and his unity, will at last have become an adult being; and having reached this apogee of his responsibility and freedom, holding in his hands all his future and all his past, will make the choice between arrogant autonomy and loving excentration.
>
> This will be the final choice: revolt or adoration of a world. And then, by an act which will supparize the toil of centuries, by this act (finally and for the first time completely human) justice will ensue and all things be renewed.[206]

Progress is basically a force, the consciousness of all that is and all that is possible. To "be" more is first of all to "know" more. Man seems to understand instinctively that to be faithful to life he must know. Hence, the attraction which draws him irresistibly towards science.[207]

---

[204] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 276. [205] Ibid., p. 267.

[206] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, pp. 18-19. He also noted here, "My purpose is not to show that a necessary or infallible line of progress exists, but simply to establish that, for Mankind as a whole, a way of progress is offered and awaits us, analogous to that which the individual cannot reject without falling into sin and damnation."

[207] Ibid., p. 19.

Man continues in process of zoological growth. Therefore, the Christian faith in God must keep pace with human progress. It must be tuned to the right frequency in order to make the world vibrate with a new resonance.[208] The extent of progress can be understood only beyond the individual. Collective humanity is called upon, said Teilhard, to perform an act "in which the full consciousness of each individual man will be sustained by that of every other man."[209]

Human achievements are necessary stages through which humanity must pass in the course of its transformation. Any achievement, even the success of a commercial enterprise, can bring progress, since everything is part of a whole in a world which is moving toward unification, and the spiritual progress and success of the universe is related to the proper functioning of every zone of that universe.[210]

The building of the future. Teilhard was convinced that his study of the past had revealed to him the structure of the future.[211] That which interested him most was the future, "the world of living ideas and the mystical life."[212] He said, "I am a pilgrim of the future on my way back from a journey made entirely in the past."[213] He believed in the future of the universe. He suspected that mankind is in the process of division between those who believe in the future and those who do not.[214] The road ahead is "open" only when man is assured of the space and opportunity to progress until he arrives at the extreme limits of himself.[215]

---

[208] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 284, citing Teilhard.

[209] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, pp. 21-22.

[210] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 164.

[211] Ibid., p. 207. [212] Ibid., p. 105. [213] Ibid., p. 101.

He sought to extrapolate a future which would be consistent with the universal "law of recurrence."[216] In spite of all appearances, the final success or failure of humanity depends on the growing intensity of our reflective and affective powers.[217] Both material and spiritual necessity govern our progress. Material necessity serves as a foundation, while spiritual necessity stimulates genuine progress.[218] Any future progress will be in a collective and spiritual form. Man is compelled by the structure of things toward a continually increasing biological self-unification. The normal extension of the movement of complexity/consciousness makes a peak of hominization (Omega Point) necessary in the future.[219] Man's future depends on an increased taste for action based on the attraction exercised on him by Omega (the approaching center of his convergence).[220] He suggested, "The generating principle of our unification is not finally to be found in the single contemplation of the same Truth or in the single desire awakened by **Something**, but in the single attraction exercised by the same **Someone**."[221]

---

[214] See Teilhard's statement quoted by Cuenot, op. cit., p. 145.

[215] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 231.

[216] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, pp. 244-245. Here again his extrapolations were based on the apparent necessity that certain things happen in order that the universe remain consistent and coherent.

[217] Ibid., p. 252. [218] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 226.

[219] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 245.

[220] Ibid., p. 261.

For Teilhard, the union of mankind must come. Otherwise, the convergent process is absurd. Peace among men is inevitable because it appears necessary to the process. It will be a peace, he said, "which will allow, express and correspond to . . . the vital in-folding in Mankind upon itself."[222] For him, "true peace, the only kind that is biologically possible, betokens neither the ending nor the reverse of warfare, but war is a naturally sublimated form."[223]

Teilhard felt that human effort was utterly vain "unless there is a both natural and supernatural emergence in the universe towards some immortal consciousness."[224] He attacked the Marxist view of man's development and future because of its exclusion of an irreversible Center at its consummation. For this reason, the momentum of Marxism can neither be justified nor sustained to the end. It will falter. "Worldly faith," said Teilhard, "is not enough in itself to move the earth forward. . . ."[225] He defended his faith in the future, and at the same time offered an apologetic to the Marxists, by reasoning:

> In the present age, what does most discredit to faith in progress . . . is the unhappy tendency still prevailing among its adepts to distort everything that is most valid

---

[221] Teilhard de Chardin, "Thoughts on Progress," Cahier I, p. 75. Point Omega is the focal point of personalization in the universe. That point, which lies in the future, exercises a kind of centripetal force which will bring about the ultimate convergence of men's "hearts."

[222] Teilhard de Chardin, "Faith in Peace," *FM*, p. 153.

[223] *Ibid*. [224] Teilhard de Chardin, *LT*, p. 202.

[225] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," *FM*, p. 265.

> and noble in our newly aroused expectation of an 'ultra-human' by reducing it to some form of threadbare millennium. The believers in progress think in terms of a Golden Age, a period of euphoria and abundance; and this, they give us to understand, is all that Evolution has in store for us. It is right that our hearts should fail us at the thought of so 'bourgeois' a paradise.
>
> We need to remind ourselves yet again, so as to offset this truly pagan materialism and naturalism, that although the laws of biogenesis by their nature presuppose, and in fact bring about, an improvement in human living conditions, it is not _well-being_ but a hunger for _more-being_ which, of psychological necessity, can alone preserve the thinking earth from the _taedium vitae._ And this makes fully plain the importance of what I have already suggested, that it is upon this point (or superstructure) of spiritual concentration, and not on its basis (or infra-structure) of material arrangement, that the equilibrium of Mankind biologically depends.
>
> For if, pursuing this thought, we accept the existence of a critical point of speciation at the conclusion of all technologies and civilisations, it means . . . that an _outlet_ appears at the peak of Time, not only for our hope of escape but for our expectation of revelation.[226]

IV. LOVE: THE TOTALIZING PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN ENERGY

In the last analysis, there is only one force at work in the world. That force is love--the affinity of being with being.[227] It is a basic characteristic of all life and embraces all successive forms of organized matter. In fact, we should assume the presence of love, in an inchoate form at least, in all things. The forces of love cause the various elements of the world to seek each other in order that the world may come into being. This is not a metaphorical, or poetic, statement.

---

[226] Teilhard de Chardin, "The End of the Species," _FM_, pp. 302-303.

[227] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 264. See also _Ibid_., p. 265.

It is literally true.[228] Love is the most formidable and mysterious energy within the cosmos.[229] It is the attraction exercised upon every conscious element by the Center of the Universe. It is the primitive and universal psychic energy, the only energy capable of personalizing the universe.

Though love has been eliminated by the realist and the positivist from his concept of the world, one must eventually recognize that it is the basic impulse of life. It is the only natural medium within which the evolutionary process can proceed. Without love, the only thing which lies ahead for mankind is the depersonalized fate of ants and termites, the prospect of standardization and enslavement.[230] Everyone agrees on the aim of totalizing without depersonalizing, saving the whole and the parts. Yet, the underlying assumption in all the systems of human organization which are currently visible, said Teilhard, "is that the final state towards which the Noosphere is tending is a body without a soul, an organism without a face, diffused Humanity, an Impersonal."[231] Such an assumption vitiates the attempt to totalize without depersonalizing, for if the universal ultimately tends to become a thing, there is no place for the person. If the peak of human evolution is impersonal, the personality of the elements (men) which observe its impersonal character will inevitably shrink under its influence. This is precisely what is happening in some quarters, observed Teilhard.

---

[228] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 264-265. Rabut, op. cit., p. 41. has criticized Teilhard at this point, objecting that the affinity of atom for atom within a molecule can hardly be called love. He disregards Teilhard's statement that this is love in a rudimentary form, not love in terms of its later development in man. See Chauchard's defense of Teilhard's position in Man and Cosmos, pp. 110-111.

[229] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Esprit de la terre," EH, p. 40. André Ligneul, Teilhard et le personnalisme (Paris: Éditions Universitaries, 1964), p. 46, notes that for Teilhard love is the superior form of human energy.

[230] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, pp. 54-55.

[231] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 70.

> The servitors of material progress or racial entities strive in vain to emerge into freedom; they are fated to be drawn in and assimilated by the determinisms they are constructing. Their own machinery mechanizes them. And from that moment there is nothing left to control the operations of human energy but brute force--the force which, quite logically, some people today would again like to make us worship.[232]

A common concentration upon a single object is the beginning of love.[233] Love is the totalizing principle of human energy. At the same time, it has a personalizing effect on every man. It is the only force capable of uniting men in such a way as to complete and fulfil them. Only love can join men by what is deepest within them.[234]

Teilhard concluded that a universal love is possible.[235] He recognized that some would object to this position as being contradictory and leading ultimately to loving no one. However, a universal love is the only way of accounting for the irresistible instinct within men towards unity. Not only is a universal love psychologically possible, but it is ultimately the only complete way in which we are able to love. It is true that one cannot love an anonymous number; but if the universe ahead assumes a face and a heart, he noted, "then in the atmosphere created by this focus the elemental attraction will immediately blossom."[236] The discoveries of the past century have tended to unify man and have given renewed impetus to the sense of the world, the sense of the earth, the human sense. Consequently, modern pantheism has arisen. This renewed impetus will ultimately lead man to plunge back into super-matter unless it leads him towards someone.[237] This emphasis upon the personal delivers Teilhard from the pitfall of pantheism.

---

[232] Ibid., p. 71.

[233] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on the Spiritual Reprecussions of the Atom Bomb," FM, p. 147.

[234] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 265; "L'Energie humaine," EH, pp. 181-182; "La Centrologie," AE, pp. 125-126, where he concluded that love is the bond which unites men and gives access to Omega.

[235] Fullman and D'Aoust, op. cit., p. 152, note that Empedocles, Plato, Aristotle, Lucretius, Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa, Pitirim Sorokin and Paul Tillich, among others, have expounded theories of cosmic love.

Love is the highest form of radial energy. At the level of man, Teilhard's law of complexity/consciousness has become a law of increasing amorization and spiritualization. Unless his picture of the construction of the world is false, somewhere, in some form, we should be able to discern an excess of personal, extra-human energy which should disclose to us the great Presence. At this point "the Christian phenomenon" becomes important for science.[238]

---

[236] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 267. He noted here that the universe does not become a person; but it charges itself "at the very heart of its development with the dominating and unifying influence of a focus of personal energies and attractions." In "The Grand Option," FM, he concluded that a flow of love emanates from Omega and animates everything. This creates within the world a new spiritual dimension. Therefore, a process of spiritualization is developing simultaneously with amorization. In PM, p. 176, he concluded that the observation of the convergence of the spirit is the basic discovery with which the study of man culminates.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Ibid., p. 292. In "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 79, he observed that love for God and neighbor is life to the Christian.

V. THE CONVERGENCE OF MAN

In man, spirit is fulfilling and achieving itself through a process of movement towards a personal center of convergence. Involved in this process is the increasing compression of mankind, tempered by the personalizing influence of love. Teilhard argued from the personal to the need for a hyper-personal, which he later interpreted in light of the Christian revelation of God in Christ.

Socialization. Socialization is the extension on a higher plane of the movement towards greater complexity and consciousness.[239] It is a higher form adopted by the process of molecularization.[240] The phenomenon of socialization is a basic and universal property of vitalized matter.[241] It is the culmination of the biological phenomenon,[242] being at the same time the authentic extension and the essential phenomenon of hominization.[243] The phenomenon of socialization began to appear with the increased complexity of the nervous system.[244] On the human level, it was in the Neolithic age that a cementing of human elements began which continues today.[245]

---

[239] Teilhard de Chardin, "Zoological Evolution and Invention," VP, p. 234. See also "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 238, and "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 156. In MPN p. 79, he defined socialization as "the association in symbiosis, subject to psychic interconnections of corpuscles that are histologically independent and strongly individualized."

[240] Teilhard de Chardin, "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 115.

[241] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, pp. 79-80.

[242] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 223.

[243] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 220.

[244] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 145.

Isolation is a blind alley which men should avoid.[246] When man is isolated from his fellow men, he is neither able to think nor advance.[247] The door to the future is not open to the chosen few, to the exclusion of all others. It is open only, he said, "to the advance of all together, in a direction in which all together can join and find completion in a spiritual renovation of the earth. . . ."[248]

Socialization is the result of the process of compression, which, in turn, results from the earth's roundness. There is an increasing pressure on mankind, and each advance causes a corresponding expansion in each man.[249] Initially, there has been a repulsion between men; but ultimately men will break the critical barrier of mutual repulsion and enter the inner zone of attraction.[250] Everyone who wishes to act must take a stand, even though he may feel somewhat hampered, amputated or revolted in so doing. Everyone desires something larger, better and more comprehensive.[251] Throughout the hostile masses who fight each other, men are scattered who await the proper shock, or ray of light, in order to orientate themselves and unite.[252] That shock will come because of the unceasing advance of evolution towards greater complexity and consciousness.[253]

---

[245] Ibid., p. 204. For his explanation of the mechanism of socialization, see MPN, pp. 97-100. See also PM, pp. 117, 118, and 306. The initiation of this movement signaled the beginning of civilization.

[246] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 237-238.

[247] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 74.

[248] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 244-245.

[249] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 229. See also PM, p. 240.

[250] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 211.

Economically and spiritually, the age of civilizations is over and the age of one civilization has begun.[254] An evolutionary future awaits man only in relation with all other men.[255] He can continue to exist only by undergoing a transformation which will forge his multiplicity into a whole.[256] From this point forward, one must envision, Teilhard suggested, "beside and above the individual realities the collective realities that are not reducible to the component element, yet are in their own way as objective as it is."[257]

The process of collective organization, or socialization, has hardly begun.[258] In spite of all the apparent chaos in the world, are moving towards an ultimate planetary unification of humanity.[259] Sooner or later the unification of man will come, because it is biologically necessary.[260] Though the ultimate form of its unification is not yet discernible, the mankind of the future will awaken to a "panorganized" world.[261] Nothing can stop the progress of social man towards greater interdependence and cohesion.[262] Consequently, the only meaningful question for man is to know where the process is leading us--towards what summit or abyss?[263]

---

[251] Teilhard de Chardin, "We Must Save Mankind," Cahier I, p. 53.

[252] Ibid., pp. 53-54. See also PM, p. 252.

[253] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Psychological Conditions of Human Unification," trans. Joseph L. Caufield, Cross Currents, III (Fall, 1952), 1-5.

[254] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 158.

[255] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 246.

[256] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 40.

[257] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 247.

[258] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Question of Fossil Man," AM, p. 125.

The ultimate success of the process of man's fulfilment (totalization) is guaranteed by the growth of the force of auto-unification which emerges from the release of psychic energy made possible by man's technico-social mastery of the earth.[264] However, it must be recognized that even though man is forced from the outside to become One, he will not yield unless he believes confidently in the future of his evolution.[265]

---

[259] Barbour, op. cit., p. 114, quoting a letter from Teilhard. See also "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 259; "The Planetisation of Mankind," FM, pp. 127, 128, 132 and 134.

[260] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 103.

[261] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 176.

[262] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 228.

[263] Teilhard de Chardin, "Does Mankind Move Biologically upon Itself?," FM, p. 249.

[264] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Unanimisation," FM, p. 284.

[265] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Psychological Conditions of Human Unification," op. cit., p. 2.

Teilhard was convinced that modern man feels an attraction for a Whole and a Oneness, conceived as a focus of unification and completion rather than as a dissolving Ocean.[266] Any fear of his being dehumanized in the process of planetization and unification are exaggerated, because it is merely the continuation of a process that produced him.[267]

The whole process of socialization flows towards a critical point of social organization.[268] Since the process of hominization has entered its convergent phase, it is becoming increasingly apparent, Teilhard noted, that "it is only as a result of synthesis, i.e. through personalization, that we can preserve the truly sacred core hidden deep within our egoism."[269] He suggested that the principles of collectivization and individualization are not opposed to each other.[270] However, there is a temptation, with the growth of interiorization and freedom, to individuation.[271]

Life, lifted to the stage of thought, cannot go on without ascending higher. The best guarantee that a thing will happen is that it be necessary; and, based on man's needs, at least two predictions can be made with reasonable hope of fulfilment: (1) some form of survival and "super-life" lie in the future for man; (2) to discover and reach this form of existence, man must think and walk "further in the direction in which the lines passed by evolution take on their maximum coherence."[272]

---

[266] Ibid., p. 4. [267] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 101.

[268] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 39.

[269] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 115.

[270] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on the Rights of Man," FM, p. 194.

[271] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 93.

The process of socialization proceeds towards a critical point of maturation, and perhaps a psychic withdrawal.[273] The conscious synthesis which is emerging from man is, in the last analysis, only definable as mind.[274] He said:

> Human endeavour, viewed in its 'natural' aspect, is tending towards some sort of collective personality, through which the individual will acquire in some degree the consciousness of Mankind as a whole. Viewed in its 'supernatural' aspect this endeavour expresses itself and culminates in a sort of participation in the divine life, whereby each individual will find, by conscious union with a Supreme Being, the consummation of his own personality.[275]

Polanyi is in agreement with Teilhard's basic position in observing that the true aim of society is in the spiritual field, and that this calls for a movement towards God.[276]

Teilhard contrasted the traditional attitude of the Church with that of the Marxists and humanists, saying:

> The traditional Church is suspicious of 'Faith in Man'; while on the other hand, the Marxists and the humanists . . . would

---

[272] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 234.

[273] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, pp. 222-223. This is as far as one can see, and argument must cease beyond this point. A Christian, however, relying on a further source of knowledge, may take one step beyond this--that the Church is the axis around which the human social organism forms.

[274] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 248. See also p. 251, where he calls it a kind of super-consciousness.

[275] Teilhard de Chardin, "Social Heredity and Progress," FM pp. 33-34.

[276] Polanyi, Science Faith and Society, op. cit., p. 83.

> bring about an asphyxiation of the world by denying any outcome through convergence in the direction of a Center of super-consciousness.[277]

Ultimately, he concluded, nothing is capable of nourishing and humanizing the giant organism erected by human socialization except "a new type of faith in the future of the Species and in a spiritual climaxing of the World."[278] A fundamental attraction from within is operating on man, leading him towards the personal Center of his convergence.[279] As a Christian, Teilhard went on to conclude:

> Let us not forget that nowhere are the elements of a complete 'evolutive energy' better recognizable and more advanced today than in a well understood Christianity: that is to say, in the flaming perception of a Universe which is neither cold, nor closed--but which irreversibly converges (Matter and Spirit altogether) on a loving and lovable Center of intense personality.[280]

Personalization. Teilhard believed that modern man is obsessed with the necessity to depersonalize (or impersonalize) all that he most desires. This is true for two reasons: (1) everything is dismantled and nothing remains but dismantled machinery and evanescent particles; and (2) energy is the new spirit, the new god. At the world's Omega, as well as at its Alpha, lies the Impersonal. Personality, he said,

---

[277] Barbour, op. cit., p. 126, quoting a letter from Teilhard, dated April 15, 1949. See also Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Unanimisation," FM, pp. 286-287, for a further attack on the Marxist position.

[278] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Psychological Conditions of Human Unification," op. cit., pp. 4-5.

[279] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Unanimisation," FM, p. 287.

[280] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Psychological Conditions of Human Unification," op. cit., p. 5.

"is seen as a specifically corpuscular and ephemeral property; a prison from which we must try to escape."[281] "It is not possible," he questioned, "that in our theories and in our acts we have neglected to give due place to the person and the forces of *personalisation*?"[282] For him, the only kind of universe able to contain the human person is an irreversibly personalizing one.[283] He summarized the method which led him to this position:

> To make room for thought in the world, I have needed to 'interiorize' matter: to imagine an energetics of the mind; to conceive a noogenesis rising upstream against the flow of entropy; to provide evolution with a direction, a line of advance and critical points; and finally to make all things double back upon *someone*.[284]

Teilhard's thought is an ascent to the Personal. For him, the Personal rises irreversibly in the universe.[285] The universe is a collector of persons.[296] It is in process of acquiring a personality.[287] He suggested:

> Unless we favour the idea of a world destined to miscarry through a fault in its construction, . . . evolutionary irreversibility and personalisation (despite their implied anticipation of the future) are realities not of a *metaphysical* but of a physical order, in the sense that,

---

[281] Teilhard de Chardin, *PM*, p. 258. [282] *Ibid*., p. 257.

[283] *Ibid*., p. 290. [284] *Ibid*.

[285] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Centrologie," *AE*, p. 124; "La Montée de l'autre," *AE*, p. 81; "The Human Rebound of Evolution," *FM*, p. 207. Otherwise, the universe would be stifling to the convergent noosphere and evolution would be absurd.

[286] Teilhard de Chardin, *PM*, p. 272.

[287] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," *FM*, p. 79. See also *LT*, p. 216: "The universe is a vast thing in which we should be lost if it did not converge upon the Person."

> like the dimensions of Time and Space, they represent general conditions to which the totality of our proceedings must conform.[288]

Christianity is the only movement capable of developing in individual souls the sense of the Absolute and the universal conceived as personal.[289]

Human energy is the end result of a massive process in which the entire universe is involved. In man, the movement of the universe towards the spirit becomes conscious.[290] The organization of human energy must finally result in the greatest possible amount of personality.[291] If the evolutionary process is to fulfill its purpose, individual men must group and tighten through the process of collectivization, with an accompanying enhancement of their personality.[292] The collectivization of men personalizes the activities of the individual.[293]

---

[288] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 207.

[289] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, pp. 177-178.

[290] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 64.

[291] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[292] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, pp. 234-235.

[293] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 183. In "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 269, he said: "All science teaches us that on the level of 'simple life' union differentiates the elements it brings together. At the stage of reflexion, as we discover by self-observation, it personalises us. By force of coreflexion, we must logically conclude, it totalises itself into 'something' in which all differences vanish on the borderline between universe and person." In PM, p. 263, he distinguished between individuality and personality, saying, "The peak of ourselves, the acme of our originality, is not our individuality but our person; and according to the evolutionary structure of the world, we can only find our person by uniting together."

The personalization of the individual is reached through the hominization of the whole group.[294] The world opens to the power of love. He suggested:

> To love is to discover and complete one's self in someone other than oneself, an act impossible of general realisation on earth so long as each man can see in his neighbour no more than a closed fragment following its own course through the world. It is precisely this state of isolation that will end if we begin to discover in each other not merely the elements of one and the same thing, but of a single Spirit in search of itself.[295]

The work of works for man is to establish in each individual an original center (man's self, or personality) through which the universe is reflected in a unique way. The essence which Omega must reclaim is the center of man's consciousness.[296]

Teilhard found that nature is disturbing, rather than satisfying, in that it is the "basis of some thing, wears the face of some one, that you can't define."[297] No satisfaction can be found in it until the ultimate goal hidden within it is reached.[298] For him, that ultimate goal is a Supreme Personality. He concluded:

---

[294] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 174.

[295] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, pp. 91-92. In "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 120, he suggested: "For men . . . to learn to love one another . . . they must acquire the consciousness, without losing themselves, of becoming one and the same person. For . . . there is no total love that does not proceed from, and exist within, that which is personal."

[296] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 261. In HB, p. 29, he noted that one's real treasure is his personality, i.e., "the particular center of perceptions and of love which one's . . . life has developed." Consequently, it is the only value which justifies one's effort. It is the portion of one's being which must not escape the Center of Supreme Personality where all the sublimated wealth of the Universe will converge. In "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 211, he suggested the occurrence of a second critical point of reflection: "If it be true that the tide of evolutionary totalisation sweeping us along requires, for its viability, not only that we must progress towards some form of irreversible unity, but also that this progress must be in the personal sphere, is not this a positive reason for believing that sooner or later something must happen in the world whereby certain basic conditions of the human phenomenon will undergo modification?"

> I cannot conceive an Evolution toward Spirit which does not end in a Supreme Personality. The Cosmos, at the climax of its converging, cannot knit itself together in some thing: it must, as already partially and elementarily in the case of Man, culminate in some one.[299]

The personalization of individuals through union takes place under the influence of this Supreme Personality.[300]

The hyper-personal. For Teilhard, the study of pre-history resulted in turning his eyes upwards and onwards in anticipation of a "super-humanity."[301] We can know of this "super-humanity" only that it will appear if we develop to the end the forces of organization which are released by a sympathy between men and the forces of religion.[302]

---

[297] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 213. [298] Ibid.

[299] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 28. See also Lucille Swan, "Memories and Letters," Neville Braybrooke, editor, Teilhard de Chardin: Pilgrim of the Future (Seabury Press: New York, 1964), quoting Teilhard, where he contends that the movement of the universe is a movement towards Someone; "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 231.

[300] Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'un Univers Personnel," EH, p. 101. Robert O. Johann, "Teilhard's Personalized Universe," Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964 (New York: Fordham University, n.d.), p. 102, observes that only by harmonizing one's life with Being itself can a person achieve himself as a person. Such achievement by the individual is the achievement of a truly personal community.

[301] Teilhard de Chardin, "Super-humanité, Super-Christ, Super-Charité," SC, pp. 196-197. Here he defined "super-humanity" as a biologically superior state which humanity apparently must achieve if it is to totalize itself completely by pushing the movement which historically culminates in it to the end. The term "super" refers to a more advanced degree of realization and perception, not to some kind of human super-person.

Even the agnostics do not contest that evolution is an ascent towards consciousness.[303] In keeping with its nature, co-reflection (noogenesis) will be penetrated ultimately by unanimity as it intensifies indefinitely within itself.[304] Teilhard concluded that "it is only in the direction of hyper-reflection--that is to say, hyper-personalization--that thought can extrapolate itself."[305] He observed that "a sort of generalized human personality is visibly in process of formation upon the earth."[306]

Man fulfills, rather than destroying, himself.[307] The movement towards ultra-hominization (super-personalization) which is now in process seems to be basically immune to the normal threats of senescence.[308]

---

[302] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Question of Fossil Man," AM, p. 125.

[303] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 258-259.

[304] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 256.

[305] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 259. See Zaehner, op. cit., p. 167, for his interpretation of the Marxist view of an eternally developing consciousness which issues in an infinite "hyperconsciousness."

[306] Teilhard de Chardin, "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, p. 32. See also "The Heart of the Problem" FM, p. 263; "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 207; "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 230; "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 164.

[307] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 253.

[308] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 112. Ibid., p. 109, he explains that he intends by the term "ultra-hominization" "the idea of a human prolonged beyond itself in a better organized, more 'adult' form than that with which we are familiar." In "Does Mankind Move Biologically upon Itself?," FM, p. 254, he pointed out that the infolding of humanity upon itself, under pressure, leads to ultra-personalization rather than dehumanization.

Man has not reached the end of his potentialities. At present, we are entering an especially critical phase of ultra-hominization. The forces of collectivization are involved in an increasingly rapid growth.[309] The ultra-organization of matter is the result of this increasing pressure. It is the basic, general condition which produces the cosmic tendency towards Improbability.[310] He said of the process of ultra-hominization:

> What is of extreme importance . . . is that we should know what course to steer, and how we must spiritually conduct ourselves if we are to ensure that the totalitarian embrace which enfolds us will have the effect, not of de-humanising us through mechanisation, but . . . of super-humanising us by the intensification of our powers of understanding and love.[311]

Teilhard believed that irreversible life lies before man. That life must culminate in a personality, and at that point man will find himself "super-personalized."[312] Thorpe joins him in concluding that belief in a hyper-personal survival is a logical necessity if man is to advance at all in his interpretation of existence.[313]

---

[309] Teilhard de Chardin, "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 113.

[310] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 159. See also MPN, p. 109; "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 258, where he said, "If to speak of world-wide human organisation seems to be (and probably is) at this moment utopian, who is to tell us that the operation will not take place of its own accord tomorrow--when man is brought, by the generally disseminated evidence of his phylectic convergence to some yet unsuspected form of 'sense of species'?" In MPN, pp. 117-118, he reminded his readers that there is a certain uncertainty involved in the process of convergence, or hominization: "Synthesis implies risk. Life is less certain than death. Accordingly, it is one thing for the earth, by its pressure to force us into the mould of some form of ultra-hominisation--and quite another for the ultra-hominisation to result."

[311] Teilhard de Chardin, "On the Probable Coming of an 'Ultra-humanity'," FM, p. 276.

[312] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 26. Ibid., p. 28, he noted that he could not conceive an evolution towards Spirit which does not culminate in a Supreme Personality.

For Marx and other materialists the individual is submerged in the mass, rather than being elevated through union in love to a higher level of being, as in Teilhard's thought. Teilhard, in contrast to Marx, repeatedly contended that a true union of heart and spirit "super-personalizes" man rather than enslaving or neutralizing the individuals it brings together.[314] For him, the hyperpersonal was the point of convergence at which there is the greatest union and the greatest consciousness, infused with the greatest love.

Immortality. Thorpe has pointed out that one of the most striking features of much Christian apologetic in recent years is the hesitation to speak very concretely about the matter of personal immortality.[315] This accusation has also been made unjustly against Teilhard. For him, the survival of the individual is implied in the survival of the collective whole. Union within the whole personalizes, or differentiates.

Teilhard contended that the process of auto-evolution (the process which began with man and continues in him) needs and demands an unlimited hope of survival in order to function. Therefore, such a process cannot be reconciled with the possibility of a total, or substantial, reversal of hominization.[316] He argued that consciousness, which is the necessary fruit of complexity, must survive in some way the final dissolution of the material foundation which bears it. When evolution begins to "think itself," he said, "it can no longer live with or further itself except by knowing itself to be irreversible--that is to say, immortal."[317]

---

[313] Thorpe, *op*. *cit*., p. 121.

[314] Teilhard de Chardin, "Life and the Planets," *FM*, p. 119. For further expressions of the idea that "union differentiates," see *PM*, p. 262; *MPN*, p. 115; *HB*, p. 30; "The Singularities of the Human Species, *AM*, p. 269; "Complementary Remarks on the Nature of the Point Omega," *AM*, p. 272; "The Grand Option," *FM*, pp. 53, 55; "The Formation of the Noosphere," *FM*, p. 183; "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," *FM*, p. 235; "Le Phénomène spirituel," *EH*, pp. 129-130; "L'Énergie humaine," *EH*, p. 179; "La Centrologie," *AE*, p. 122; "The Natural Units of Humanity," *VP*, p. 208.

[315] Thorpe, *op*. *cit*., p. 104.

---

[316] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phylectic Structure of the Human Group," AM, p. 170.

[317] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Human Rebound of Evolution," FM, p. 206. LT, pp. 357-358, quoting Teilhard's "L'Esprit de la terre," EH, pp. 49-51, he said: "There is no virtue in self-sacrifice when no higher interest is at stake. A universe which continued to function, to work in conscious anticipation of absolute death, would be an absurd world, a monster of the mind, a veritable chimaera. Thus, since the world is before our eyes, 'hic et nunc', as a vast activity, developing continually with the assurance of power, there can be no doubt that it is capable of nourishing indefinitely in those who are born of it, a continually more critical, more demanding and more refined appetite for living; that it contains within itself the guarantee of ultimate success. As soon as the universe admits thought within itself, it can no longer be merely temporary nor can there be limits to its evolution. It must, from its very structure progress into the absolute. Hence whatever appearance of instability we may find in life, and however impressed we may be by its strict attachment to the spatial dimensions that delimit it and the forces that disintegrate it, one thing above all is certain (because it is certain as the world itself): namely, the Spirit always will, as it always has, make sport of every sort of determinism and chance. It represents the indestructible portion of the universe." In LT, p. 202, he observed, "What an absurd thing life is, looked at superficially: so absurd that you feel yourself forced back on a stubborn, desperate, faith in the reality and survival of the spirit. Otherwise--were there no such thing as the spirit, I mean--we should have to be idiots not to call off the whole human effort." In HB, pp. 21-22, he said, "I recognized that it was nothing to have discovered in men a birth of Spirit, if that Spirit was not immortal. Immortality (that is, in the general sense in which I use the word here, irreversibility) is a property which seems to me to follow, as a necessary complement, any idea of a Universal progress. That, in the Whole, the Universe may never stop nor go back in the movement which takes it towards more liberty and greater consciousness,--this was first suggested to me by

Teilhard argued for immortality on the basis of action. The more humanity becomes aware of its duration, numbers, potentialities, and the great burden it must bear to survive, the more it realizes that if all this effort is to end in nothing, man has been cheated and can only rebel. He insisted that for a planetized humanity, irreversibility becomes a requisite of action.[318] Again, he argued that in all living things there is a preference for being over not-being; otherwise, evolution would be physically impossible. Therefore, immortality is a structural and physical necessity for the movement of evolution. Since it seems necessary to the process, immortality must be a reality.[319] Thorpe

---

the very nature of Spirit. By nature Spirit is ever growing; no appreciable limit, for instance, to the deepening of knowledge and of love. But if it can grow without limit, is it not an indication that it will do so in fact, in a Universe where the fundamental law seems to be: all that is possible is realized?"

[318] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 180. In HB, p. 25, he concluded: "The perspective of a total death (it is necessary to reflect a great deal on those words to measure their destructive power on our souls), this perspective, I say, having become conscious, would immediately damage in us the source of effort. Look about us at the increasing number of those who secretly cry because of boredom, and of those who kill themselves to escape life. . . . The day is near when Humanity will perceive that, in virtue of its position in a Cosmic Evolution which it has become capable of discovering and criticizing, it finds itself placed biologically between suicide and adoration." In the same vein, see HB, p. 23, where he concluded: "We only advance through the hope of an immortal conquest. And I conclude directly: Therefore there is immortality in front of us."

[319] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, pp. 262-263. He argued in HB, p. 25: "If . . . not by fantasy, but by an internal necessity, the 'reflective life' cannot move except towards Immortality,--then, being given the stage already reached by the evolution of my faith, I have the right to conclude, as I have done; 'Therefore Immortality exists.' And in truth, if the World, taken in its totality, is something infallible . . . and if, furthermore, it moves towards Spirit . . . then it must be capable of furnishing us the essential condition for the continuation of such a movement; that is, an unlimited horizon. Otherwise, powerless to maintain the progress it generates, the Universe would find itself in the impossible position of having to dissolve in disgust each time that it becomes conscious of itself."

correctly observes, agreeing with Teilhard's basic position, that the hope of immortality is a part of the overall Christian belief in the ultimate reliability of the nature of things.[320]

Omega. The ultimate end of the evolutionary advance is a unity of mankind in a super-organism that poses no threat to the persons composing it. Mankind appears to have reached a level of its evolution in which it cannot deal with the problems facing it as the result of the growth of the energy within it without construing for itself a center of evolution and adoration.[321] The normal extension of the growth of complexity/consciousness leads man to a peak of hominization which Teilhard called "point Omega."[322] This point is the supreme center of personalization, concentration and cohesion.[323] Teilhard listed the four attributes of Omega as autonomy, actuality, irreversibility and transcendence.[324] He concluded that Omega is "independent of the collapse of the forces with which evolution is woven."[325] It is an objective reality which is immanent in the process and at the same time transcendent. Omega is the last term of the evolutionary series and is also outside all series. As the last term of the series, it reveals itself from below as the apex of a pyramid. It crowns and closes the process. As transcendent, it escapes the time and space which it gathers together; otherwise, it would not be Omega.[326] Omega is not the end product of evolution. It is truly transcendent in that it is present at the beginning and the end of the process.[327]

---

[320] Thorpe, op. cit., p. 113.

[321] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Natural Units of Humanity," VP, p. 215. Regarding the dilemma faced by mankind today, he said in "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 142, "Either you regard the world as a collection of physically linked beings, travelling by way of growth as a whole towards an organic consummation; and then, once more you are in your heart an evolutionist. Or else you see in the universe nothing but a system of moral and juridical relationships by which continguous beings are associated; and then you have lost all rightful means of restraining the advance of egoistic and agnostic individualism which threatens to dissolve and sweep away the thinking zone of the earth."

[322] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 246. See also "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 236: "I am very much less disposed to believe today that the tightening of the human mass will of itself suffice to warm the human heart. But I continue to believe, if anything more strongly, in the hidden existence and eventual release of forces of attraction between men which are as powerful in their own way as nuclear energy appears to be, at the other end of the spectrum of complexity. And surely this kind of attraction, the necessary condition of our unity, which must be linked at its root with the radiations of some ultimate Centre (at once transcendent and immanent) of psychic congregation: the same Centre as that whose existence, opening for human endeavour a door to the Irreversible, seems indispensable . . . for the preservation of the will to advance, in defiance of death, upon an evolutionary path become

---

reflective, conscious of the future. . . ." Cuenot, op. cit., p. 372, cites Teilhard as suggesting that Omega must always, by its nature, remain a conjecture and a postulate.

[323] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 141.

[324] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 270-271. See also his "Complementary Remarks on the Nature of the Point Omega," AM, p. 271.

[325] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 270. He reasoned that our constructions will vanish with the earth as long as they rest entirely on the earth. The great defect of all positivist forms of belief in progress is that they do not clearly eliminate death. A focus of evolution (Omega) is worthless if it is doomed to eventual disintegration. Therefore, Omega must be independent of the process of evolution.

[326] Ibid., pp. 270-271. He pointed out in "The Heart of the Problem," FM, p. 265, that Marxism rules out the existence of an irreversible Center at the consummation of anthropogenesis. At this point he may be clearly contrasted with Marxism.

[327] Mooney, op. cit., pp. 54-55. Teilhard further elaborated on the transcendence of Omega in "L'Esprit de la terre," EH, pp. 52-57. See also PM, p. 307, where he said, "The human group is . . . turning, by planetary arrangement and convergence of all elemental terrestrial reflections, towards a second critical pole of reflection of a

Point Omega is the critical point of super-reflection,[328] the focal point of the convergence of thought, and thus, of the evolutionary process. Through incorporation in Omega, which possesses the quality of a person, man achieves his completeness.[329] He concluded that the generative principle of the unification of the earth should be finally sought in the attraction exerted by a single "Being," rather than in the intense concentration on a single truth or the desire of a single "Thing."[330]

Teilhard defined Omega as:

> a distinct Centre radiating at the core of a system of centres; a grouping in which personalisation of the All and personalisations of the elements reach their maximum, simultaneously and without merging, under the influence of a supremely autonomous focus of union.[331]

---

collective and higher order; towards a point beyond which . . . we can see nothing directly, but a point through which we can nevertheless prognosticate the contact between thought, born of involution upon itself of the stuff of the universe, and that transcendent focus we call Omega, the principle which at one and the same time makes this involution irreversible and moves and gathers it in." He further clarified his belief in the transcendence of Omega in MPN, p. 116: "Omega point . . . lies, strictly speaking, outside the scientifically observable process to which it provides the conclusion: the reason being, that to attain Omega (by the very act, indeed, of attaining it) we step outside space and time. At the same time, this transcendence does not prevent it from appearing to our scientific thought as necessarily endowed with certain expressible properties."

[328] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 264.

[329] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 55.

[330] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 75. In PM, p. 57, he referred to J. B. S. Haldane in support of his conclusion. In "Human Energy," Cahier I, pp. 67-68, he concluded that Omega must be a center distinct from the centers which would join it; and it must possess its own personality.

[331] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 262-263.

Omega radiates personally on man,[332] and draws him upwards from within.[333] The existence of Point Omega is physically required for the sustained operation of the Noosphere, which requires a real pole of psychic convergence, "a Centre different from all other centers, which it 'supercentrates' by assimilating them; a Person distinct from all other persons, whom it fulfils by uniting them to itself."[334] He further concluded, "The World would not function, if there were not, somewhere outside time and space, a cosmic point of total synthesis."[335]

Omega is not only "He towards whom all converges," but simultaneously, "He from whom all radiates." "It is impossible," he reasoned,

---

[332] Ibid., p. 292.

[333] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 230. See also "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 92.

[334] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 68. See also "The Natural Units of Humanity," VP, p. 215, where he concluded: "If we study its most profound features, those of liberty, humanity seems certainly to have reached the stage of its evolution in which it cannot from any viewpoint face the problems presented to it by the growth of its inner energy without defining for itself a centre of love and adoration.

Many of my scientific colleagues will, I know, recoil from this conclusion. But I do not see how they can escape it any more than I can, once they make up their minds to look honestly before them. Just as man . . . will lose the courage to construct and go on seeking, so he will have no more strength to conquer the inner antipathies which separate him from the joys of unit unless he finally becomes conscious that he is drawing near, together with the universe, not only to some thing but to Someone." In "The Spirit of Earth," Cahier I, pp. 62-63, he reasoned: "By the capital event of Hominization the most 'advanced' part of the Cosmos found itself personalized . . . Since everything in the Universe takes place in the personalized being, the ultimate Term of the universal Convergence must also possess (in a supreme degree) the quality of a Person. To super-animate, without destroying, a Universe made up of personal elements, he must himself be a special Centre. Thus, re-appears, no longer instinctive, but closely linked with contemporary ideas on evolution, the traditional conception of a God exerting an intellectual influence upon immortal monads, distinct from himself."

[335] Ibid. See also PM, p. 259, in further support of his argument.

"to place him as a focus at the summit of the Universe, without at the same time diffusing his presence in the intimate heart of the smallest movement of Evolution."[336] Consequently, it becomes clear to those who "see" that everything, "provided it is placed in the line of progress, warms, enlightens and animates itself, and in consequence becomes the subject of total adhesion."[337] The elements of the world continue to personalize themselves ever more by acceding to Omega, the personal goal of unification. From Omega all the essential energy of the world flows and to it that energy returns. That energy is the energy of love, "the supreme form and totalizing principle of human Energy."[338] He suggested:

> In the perspective of a noogenesis, time and space become truly humanised--or rather super-humanised. Far from being mutually exclusive, the Universal and Personal (that is to say, the 'centered') grow in the same direction and culminate simultaneously in each other.
>
> It is therefore a mistake to look for the extension of our being or of the noosphere in the Impersonal. The Future-Universal could not be anything else but the Hyper-Personal--at the Omega Point.[339]

No man can achieve happiness other than through reunion with the whole and the transcendent center necessary to the movement of the whole.[340] Teilhard saw Omega not only in future perspective, but as a present reality.[341] Omega is at present radiating a psychic warmth and kindness upon man, enveloping him in the process of totalization, personalization and spiritualization. Without this influence (the attractive force of love-energy) man's economic and technological hold on the world would only "crush souls together, without causing them to fuse and unite."[342]

---

[336] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 69.

[337] Ibid. [338] Ibid., p. 68.

[339] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 260.

[340] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 139.

Before man's appearance, the attractive force of Omega was active, but only blindly felt by the world. Since the appearance of man, that attraction has been felt at least partially in the freedom of the noosphere; and it sustains religion. Religion is not an option for man. Neither is it a purely individual intuition. It represents,

> the long unfolding, through the collective experience of all Mankind, of the existence of God--God reflecting himself personally on the organized sum of thinking monads, to guarantee a sure issue, and to lay down exact laws for their hesitant activities.[343]

One last metamorphosis is now in process in the world--"the realization of God at the heart of the Noosphere, the passage of the circles to their common Centre, the apparition of the 'Theosphere'. . . ."[344]

---

[341] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 267-268.

[342] Teilhard de Chardin, "On the Probable Coming of an 'Ultra-humanity'," FM, p. 277.

[343] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Spirit of Earth," Cahier I, p. 62.

[344] Teilhard de Chardin, "Human Energy," Cahier I, p. 72.

VI. SUMMARY

Using man as the key to understanding the universe, Teilhard developed the third stage of his apologetic. In man the forces of convergence become more intense. Before man, the play of chance was the dominant mechanism in evolution. Man appeared at the instant reflective thought was born. Since that time, evolution has become more and more conscious of itself; and a predominance of freedom over chance has existed. However, an upper spiritual goal, whose basic energy is love, has been the directing force through the whole process; and it continues to urge evolution towards increasingly more freedom. The move towards increasing freedom is also a move towards more personal relationships and decisions and a recognition that the upper goal of evolution must be personal in nature. The success of hominization, the achievement of the personal goal of evolution, is assured by the conviction that the world is not absurd.

Using his law of complexity/consciousness, he concluded that evolution is moving towards greater levels of improbability and personality. In other words, it is moving towards a supreme, personal Center. Man's tools, the product of his high level of consciousness, are extensions of his mind. They provide him with more freedom and, therefore, assist the movement of noogenesis towards the personal goal. All human research also contributes to this movement. Man's convergence involves a process of growing socialization, or collectivity, which is also a process of personalization. Man's irreversible life must, unless the world is absurd, culminate in a kind of super-personalization in the supreme, personal Center of the universe. This will be a union in which his personality is retained through the differentiating and personalizing power of love.

CHAPTER V

THE PERSONAL SUPREME AS THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST

Teilhard concluded his credo with the statement, "I believe that the Personal Supreme is the Universal Christ."[1] It represents the last step in his apologetic. Up to this point, he had been thinking basically on a scientific level. On that basis he arrived at a supreme, personal focus of evolution--Point Omega. Subsequently, in a leap of faith, he identified Omega with the Christ of revelation.

How can a Christian, who believes in transcendent values and the message of the cross, assign any importance to earthly values and occupations? It was only after an extended struggle that Teilhard was able to reach the conviction that a possibility exists of effecting a reconciliation of "the supreme and absolute love of God with the lower (but still legitimate and necessary) love of life embraced under its natural forms,"[2] says Smulders.

Teilhard concluded that science and faith need each other, neither being able to develop normally without the other.[3] Both are charged, or animated, by the same life. He concluded, "Neither in its impetus nor its achievements can science go to its limits without becoming tinged with mysticism and charged with faith."[4] He maintained:

---

[1] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, unnumbered page preceding the title page.

[2] Piet Smulders, The Design of Teilhard de Chardin: An Essay in Theological Reflection, trans. Arthur Gibson (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1967), p. 202.

> When, in the universe in movement to which we have just awakened, we look at the temporal and spatial series diverging and amplifying themselves around and behind us like the laminae of a cone, we are perhaps engaging in pure science. But when we turn towards the summit, towards the totality and the future, we cannot help engaging in religion.
>
> Religion and science are the two conjugated faces or phases of one and the same complete act of knowledge--the only one which can embrace the past and future of evolution so as to contemplate, measure and fulfil them.[5]

In the conjunction of science and religion, reason and mysticism, man is destined to achieve his utmost fulfillment.

For Teilhard, the true meeting point of science and religion is at Point Omega. Here, his extrapolation of the future, based on his observations of nature as a scientist, is fused with the self-revelation of God in Christ.

Teilhard judged that an evolution toward spirit must end in a Supreme Personality.[6] Religion is the next logical step beyond belief in personality. He was led by the logic of his faith to blend himself into the general religious experience of humanity.

---

[3] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 283. See also his "Barrière de la mort et co-réflexion," AE, p. 428: "Science and Revelation can continue to perform their proper functions only within that movement which carries them closer towards each other."

[4] Ibid., p. 284. [5] Ibid., p. 285.

[6] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 28.

He suggested:

> Born of a need which the Earth has to express to itself a God, Religion is attached and coextensive, not to an individual man, but to the entire Humanity. In it, as in science, is accumulated, corrected and little by little infallibly organized, an infinite amount of human research. How can I avoid following? And where else will I find a confirmation and a complement to the personal movement which has secretly brought me to the feet of an adorable, but as yet silent, Presence?[7]

However, one should not jump to the conclusion that Teilhard was an advocate of universal syncretism. He continually alluded to the transcendence of Christianity.[8]

Teilhard frequently emphasized that Christianity is a religion of the person. He said:

> The essential core of Christianity, in my view, is certainly none of the humanitarian or moral ideals so dear both to believers and unbelievers: it is to maintain and preserve 'the primacy of the Personal', extended analogically to the whole--and also positively to bring the World into contact with the supreme Person, that is to say, to give him a name.[9]

He observed that the world, generally speaking, denies both the Personal and God, "because it believes in the Whole! It all comes back to showing the world that it must, on the contrary, believe in the Personal because it believes in the Whole."[10] Teilhard believed that in the course of the creation of the science of human energetics, "science, by being led to concentrate on man [the highest and most personal element of evolution], will find itself increasingly face to face with religion."[11]

---

[7] *Ibid*., p. 33.

[8] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Étoffe de l'univers," *AE*, p. 406.

[9] de Lubac, *op. cit*., p. 18, citing a letter dated August 15, 1936. de Lubac claims, *ibid*., pp. 14-15, that Teilhard's emphasis on personality came primarily from his contact with Valensin.

[10] Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, trans. René Hague (London: Collins, 1967), p. 148, citing a letter by Teilhard dated August 15, 1936.

I. THE CHRIST

Incarnation and revelation. The Incarnation of God in the historical Jesus of the Gospels was a significant event for Teilhard.[12] Christianity was for him a religion of the Incarnation.[13] He observed, "Without an historical and traditional revelation, our Lord simply disappears."[14] All which came before Christ was part of the preparatory process which was cosmically and biologically necessary before his appearance on earth.[15] With the appearance of Christ, when God descended into nature,[16] a turning point of history was reached. However, the Incarnation was not completed with its historical actualization in the man, Jesus. Teilhard expanded his view to include the mystical incorporation of the world into God through the continuing attractive power of the resurrected, cosmic Christ. For him, the essence of Christianity is "belief in the world's unification in God by the Incarnation."[17] He saw the Incarnation as a single event which has been developing in the world from the inception of Messianic preparation until the Parousia.[18] Therefore, he could say, "The Incarnation will be complete only when the part of chosen substance contained in every object--spiritualised first of all in our souls and a second time in our souls in Jesus--has rejoined the final Centre of its completion."[19] It is in the sense of the growth of the mystical Body of Christ that he referred to the completion, or forming, of Christ.[20] In no sense is Christ the end result of the natural process of evolution. An accurate understanding of the Incarnation may be obtained only by looking at things from the point of view of the completed Incarnation--the formed Christ. Teilhard concluded:

---

[11] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 283.

[12] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 94-95. Perhaps his strongest statement in this regard is found here: "If you suppress the historical reality of Christ, the divine omnipresence which intoxicates us becomes, like all the other dreams of metaphysics, uncertain, vague, conventional—lacking the decisive experimental verification by which to impose itself on our minds, and without the moral directives to assimilate our lives into it. . . . however dazzling the expansions which we shall try . . . to discern in the resurrected Christ, their beauty and their stuff of reality will always remain inseparable from the tangible and verifiable truth of the Gospel event. The mystical Christ, the universal Christ of St. Paul, has neither meaning nor value in our eyes except as an expansion of the Christ who was born of Mary and who died on the Cross. The former essentially draws His fundamental quality of undeniability and concreteneness from the latter. However far we may be drawn into the divine spaces opened up to us by Christian mysticism, we never depart from the Jesus of the Gospels. On the contrary, we feel a growing need to enfold ourselves ever more firmly within His human truth."

[13] Teilhard de Chardin, "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, p. 33. Here he concluded: "By definition and in essence Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation: God uniting Himself with the world which He created, to unify it and in some sort incorporate it in Himself. To the worshipper of Christ this act expresses the history of the universe."

[14] de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning, op. cit., p. 46, citing a letter by Teilhard dated December 31, 1926.

---

[15] Teilhard de Chardin, HU, p. 77.

[16] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Mystique de la science," EH, p. 220.

[17] Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'un univers personnel," EH, p. 113.

[18] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 102.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 30. See also "Social Heredity and Progress," FM, p. 33: "We cannot continue to love Christ without discovering Him more and more. The maturing of a collective consciousness accompanied by numerical expansion: these are two aspects inseparably linked in the historical unfolding of the Incarnation." In "The Mass on the World," HU, p. 24, he said: "Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate."

[20] Smulders, *op. cit.*, p. 239, citing Teilhard's essay, "La Vie cosmique," ET: "Everything was moving toward the Infant born of the Woman. And since Jesus' birth, his coming to man's estate, his dying

> Not a single thing in our changing world is really understandable except in so far as it has reached its terminus. . . . Hence if we want to form a correct idea of the Incarnation, it is not at its beginnings that we must situate ourselves (Annunciation, Nativity, even the passion), but as far as possible at its definitive terminus.[21]

The existence and communicating power of God were assumed by Teilhard. He said, "Once we have admitted the personality of God, the possibility and even the theoretical probability of a revelation . . . is eminently in accordance with the nature of things."[22] For him, "The fact of the Incarnation . . . cannot be known by the way of pure inference," but only by "adherence to an affirmation received from above."[23] In fact, revelation is the only influence that "can preserve from fatal misdirection the accumulated powers at the heart of the individual, of societies and of the World itself."[24]

---

and his rising again, everything has continued to move, because Christ has not finished forming himself. He has not caught up to himself the last folds of the Robe of flesh and the love formed for him by his faithful. The mystical Christ has not attained his full growth. And in the prolongation of this begetting is located the mainspring of all created activity."

[21] Mooney, op. cit., p. 72, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Pantheisme et christianisme," 1923.

[22] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 178, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Introduction à la vie chrétienne," 1944.

[23] Ibid., p. 179.

[24] Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'un univers personnel," EH, p. 89.

Christogenesis and the cosmic Christ. Teilhard conceived of a synthesis taking place between the cosmos and Christ.[25] He supposed that through his assumption of human nature in the Incarnation Christ actually became an organic part of the cosmos. He also assumed the redemption of the cosmos, since Jesus, the Son of Man, shared in all human activities and blessed the earth. Finally, he believed in the permanence of the Incarnation in the Eucharist as well as in the mystical Body of Christ, since the Church is his Body. He concluded that since Christ became an integral part of the cosmos through his Incarnation, then the resurrected Christ became the organic center of the cosmos, because he was certainly not less after his death than he was before. He suggested, "The effect of twenty centuries of mystical travail has been precisely to show us that the Baby of Bethlehem, the Man on the Cross, is also the Principle of all movement and the unifying Centre of the world. . . ."[26] Thus, through the resurrection, Christ's body became coextensive with the cosmos to which it was organically bound in the Incarnation. The Christ truly became "cosmic" as the organic center of the universe and the driving force of evolution. The cosmic Christ was, for Teilhard, the Jesus of the Gospels, whe one who came down from heaven and ascended to the Father in victory over death. It is he who remains concrete and personal and mysteriously present in all things, who is active in all realities, and who is the builder of history. "This awareness, this faith," Smulders notes, "was for Teilhard the great liberating discovery of his life."[27]

---

[25] Teilhard de Chardin, *HB*, p. 41: "The Universal-Christ, such as I understand is a synthesis of Christ and the Universe. By no means a new Divinity,--but the inevitable development of the mystery in which is summed up Christianity: the Incarnation."

[26] Teilhard de Chardin, *HU*, citing his unpublished essay, "Le Coeur de la matière," 1950.

The cosmic Christ has no meaning except "as an expansion of the Christ who was born of Mary and who died on the Cross,"[28] said Teilhard. He anticipated investing his last years in "scientific work to establish the 'convergence' of the universe, and religious work to bring out the universal nature of the historic Christ."[29] In the cosmic Christ, he revealed, "I have truly found that which my being has dreamed, a personalized Universe, the domination of which personalizes me."[30]

The unique purpose of the world, Teilhard believed, is "the physical incorporation of the faithful in Christ, who is of God."[31] Initially, an operation of a transcendent nature was necessary, which grafted "the Person of a Deity on to the Human Cosmos. . . ."[32] He saw in the Incarnation a unique renewal and restoration of the forces of the cosmos, maintaining that "Christ is the instrument, the centre, the end of all animate and material Creation; by Him all things are created, sanctified, made alive."[33] In Teilhard's thought, the universe became sacramental in nature.[34] Men encounter the Christ everywhere in creation. His theology, which could be called a theology of the Incarnation, saw in that Incarnation a redemption of the whole cosmos.[35]

---

[27] Smulders, op. cit., p. 237.

[28] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 95. See also his "La Parole attendue," Cahier IV, p. 28, where he suggested that the cosmic Christ was born from an expansion of the heart of Jesus.

[29] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 347.

[30] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 44.

[31] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Vie cosmique," FM, p. 304.

[32] Ibid. [33] Ibid.

For Teilhard, the evolutionary process was a cosmogenesis; but it was also a Christogenesis--a generation, or development, of the mystical Body of Christ. He concluded, "It is in literal not metaphorical terms that the Christian believer can illumine and further the genesis of the Universe around him in the form of a Christogenesis."[36]

Christ acts as a center from which the energies of evolution lead the universe back to God through his humanity.[37] In him, the "real earth," that is, "that chosen part of the universe, still almost universally dispersed and in course of gradual segregation,"[38] is taking on body and form. Christogenesis became, for Teilhard, an extension of cosmogenesis and noogenesis.[39]

---

[34] Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Prêtre," ET, pp. 298-299.

[35] At this point, his theology is more in keeping with that of the East than the West.

[36] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 224. See also DM, p. 31: "Each one of our works . . . contributes to perfect Christ in His mystical totality." In his "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 22, he said, "Christ, as we know, fulfils Himself gradually through the ages in the sum of our individual endeavours." In "La Vie cosmique," FM, p. 305, he suggested that Christ has not yet completed his own forming and that he is the fulfilment of the natural evolution of beings. In MM, pp. 180-181, he wrote of completing Christ. In "Christ in the World of Matter," HU, p. 54, he applied this same terminology: "God, who is eternal Being-in-itself, is, one might say, everywhere in process of formation for us."

[37] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 101.

[38] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 165.

[39] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 297: "If the world is convergent and if Christ occupies its centre, then the Christogenesis of St. Paul and St. John is nothing else and nothing less than the extension, both

Of the thousands of pages which Teilhard wrote, very few deal with the subject of creation, as such.[40] However, it must be remembered that his task was that of advocating the reality of God and his act of creation in the agnostic environment of naturalist and evolutionist circles.

Teilhard's metaphysics is contained in an unpublished essay, "Comment je vois."[41] His concept of creation is based on his notion of being. He wrote:

> In an earlier period it was necessary to begin by taking as completely given . . . the indestructible and self-sufficient presence of a 'First Being' (our Omega Point). Otherwise . . . there is nothing to function as a foundation, and one cannot take even a single step forward. But, in order that this primary and ultimate Center subsist in itself in its splendid isolation, we are compelled to represent it (conformably to a 'revealed' datum--a matter of a later period in history) as encompassing a trinitarian relation within itself. Thus even in these primal profundities the ontological principle which is taken as a basis for our metaphysics

---

awaited and unhoped for, of that noogenesis in which cosmogenesis--as regards our experience--culminates." For further elaboration on this subject, see his "Super-humanité, super-Christ, super-charité," SC, pp. 213-217; "Catholicisme et science," SC, pp. 239-240.

[40] Smulders, op. cit., p. 57, claims there are only ten. August Brunner, "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: a Critique," Theology Digest, VIII (1960), 145, makes an inaccurate statement in saying, "Creation as God's act is scarcely mentioned by Teilhard. God appears merely as the term of an ascending movement, never as its origin." T. V. Fleming, "Two Unpublished Letters of Teilhard," The Heythrop Journal, VI (January, 1965), 43, notes that some have complained that Teilhard made no mention in The Phenomenon of Man of creation. However, in his defense he says, "But Teilhard's book is addressed primarily to agnostic scientists, so he takes as his terminus a quo the de facto evidence for evolution, which they accept with an almost religious fervour." Though this is true, C. d'Armagnac, "La Pensée du Père Teilhard de Chardin comme apologétique moderne," Nouvelle revue theologique, LXXXIV (June, 1962), regrets that Teilhard did not spell out his belief in God as Alpha as well as Omega in The Phenomenon of Man.

[41] Georges Crespy, "Teilhard de Chardin on Evil and the Cross," Philosophy Today, VIII (Summer, 1964), 86.

> is shown to be valid and capable of performing an explicative function: God himself, in a strictly true sense, exists only through a unifying action.[42]

The practice of deducing the world from some general idea of being fails to consider, says Crespy, that "being is not static and isolated, but quickened by a movement of union. Being exists, . . . only in a relation whose meaning is union with other beings."[43] Teilhard's First Being is equated with the Omega Point. Therefore, the First Being is not first chronologically. It has a dynamic priority which places it at the end of the process which it has initiated. The process is a movement toward the First Being. It is only at the end of the process that it appears as the First Being.[44] Teilhard asserted:

> In the very act by which His existence is posited, God, . . . is triune. But this is not all. By reason of the very fact that the divine existence involves within itself a unifying relation, the first Being gives rise to another sort of opposition, no longer within itself, but at its poles (_a third and still later stage_). There is self-subsistent Unity at the axis of being and then, as a necessary consequence, the manifold along its periphery. Let us be clear that we are speaking of the _pure manifold_, or the creatable nothingness . . . which, despite its being nothing and because of its passive aptitude for order (that is, its aptitude for union), is a possibility, a begging for being, such that everything happens as if God were incapable of refusing it. It is here, at this depth, that our intellect is no longer able to distinguish supreme necessity from supreme freedom.[45]

In this text, he seems to say that what will become a world in evolution "exists eternally as a promise of that world because the divine intra-trinitarian relation is its font."[46] The original "chaos" is not simply a pure, unformed matter. Because of its aptitude, or begging, for being, it contains a pre-structure of union.[47] Teilhard does not intend to suggest that matter is co-eternal with God. For him, it was not the idea of non-being which must be replaced by a multiple or a unifiable. Rather, it is the idea of a pure multiple which must be identified with that of nothingness.[48] The idea of physical nothingness, or creatable nothingness, corresponds to that of a potential or possible world. "It is a factual nothingness," says de Lubac, "as opposed to a pseudo-idea of (physically) contradictory nothingness."[49] The creatable nothingness, or pure manifold, which has no kind of existence, is "that on which all possible worlds converge axially."[50] The pure manifold must be conceived as a pure possibility of disperson, and creation is the reversal of this possibility. Before the world came into existence, said Teilhard, "God stood alone."[51]

---

[42] _Ibid_., p. 88, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Comment je vois."

[43] _Ibid_. [44] _Ibid_., p. 89.

[45] _Ibid_., citing "Comment je vois." [46] _Ibid_., p. 90.

Teilhard further clarified his position, suggesting that God's creative act is the primary impulsion which begins and continues the forward evolutionary movement. It is an act of pleromization which is exerted on a pure manifold which is eternally suited for union, "because it is constituted by antithesis, having its source in the Trinity and realizing in itself the image of the Trinity."[52] God created only once, in such a way that he "does not so much 'make' things as 'make them make themselves'," [53] Teilhard wrote. The evolutionary process is not creative; rather, it is an expression of creation.[54] Teilhard asserted, "To create (since, . . . to create is to unite), God is inevitably led to an immersion in the manifold, in order that He might incorporate it in Himself."[55] Contrary to his approach in "Comment je vois," in the vast majority of his writings, Teilhard concentrated almost exclusively on the person and work of Christ. He conceived of him as the creative Word, who was incarnate in Jesus. He became the risen Lord of the universe; and he raises and consummates mankind through his Church and sacraments. He spoke of Christ as the "evolver," and the source of evolution.[56] He is also the animator,

---

[47] Ibid. [48] de Lubac, op. cit., p. 196. [49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., citing Teilhard de Chardin, "La Lutte contre la multitude," ET.

[51] Ibid., p. 197, citing Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Union creatrice," ET.

[52] Crespy, op. cit., p. 90. Here, he cites "Comment je vois" once again: "Always in classical philosophy (or theology) creation, pr participation . . . tends to be presented as an almost arbitrary act of the First Cause, as if He operated (making use of an analogy of 'efficient causality') in the manner of a completely undetermined mechanism. It is as if creation were (in the legalistic sense of the term) an 'act of God.' In a metaphysics of union, on the contrary, if

---

the self-sufficient and self-determining nature of the absolute Being remains intact (since I insist that the pure, polar manifold is only potentiality and pure passivity--itself a simple antithetical image of the trinitarian Being), the creative act, nevertheless, takes on a meaning and a structure which are perfectly definite. In some sense the fruit of the reflection of God, no longer in Him, but outside Him, the Pleromization--as St. Paul calls it--that is, the realization of participated being through order and totalization, appears as a kind of replica or symmetrical image of Trinitization. The Pleromization comes to fill up a void in some way. It finds its place. And, at the same time, it becomes expressible in the same terms that we have used to define being. To create is to unite."

[53] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Transformist Question," VP, p. 25. See also "What Should We Think of Transformism?," VP, p. 154; "The Transformist Paradox," VP, p. 102: "For the Christian transformist, God's creative action is no longer conceived as an intrusive thrusting of His works into the midst of pre-existent beings, but as a bringing to birth of the successive stages of His work in the heart of things."

[54] Teilhard de Chardin, "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 231.

[55] Crespy, op. cit., citing "Comment je vois."

[56] Teilhard de Chardin, "Super-humanité, super-Christ, super-charité," SC, pp. 211-212; "L'Étoffe de l'univers," AE, p. 405.

the driving force of the world, the mover of anthropogenesis.[57] Teilhard concluded, from an apologetic stance, that the only way to defeat Communism, which he considered both inadequate and incomplete, is to present Christ accurately--"not an opiate (or distraction) but the essential driving forces behind a hominization that can never reach its full development of energy except in a world whose peak is open to love--is'amorized'."[58]

Christ and evil. Teilhard recognized that the problem of evil will always be one of the most troublesome mysteries of the universe.[59] However, he contended that this problem should be re-stated in dynamic terms.[60] He suggested that the idea of a complete God who is good and a completed world which is evil presents an insolvable problem. For him, the completion of God was not in question. However, he suggested that if we dismiss the idea of a completed world, the problem of evil can be intellectually (as opposed to vitally) resolved.[61]

---

[57] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Mass on the World," HU, p. 34; MM, p. 184; "The Heart of the Problem," FM, p. 269: Christ is seen not only "as the Saviour of individual souls, but (precisely because He is the Redeemer in the fullest sense) as the ultimate mover of anthropogensis." He noted in PM, p. 308, that the final success of hominization (anthropogenesis) depends on Christ: "For a Christian believer it is interesting to note that the final success of hominisation (and thus cosmic involution) is positively guaranteed by the 'redeeming virtue' of the God incarnate in his own creation."

[58] Cuenot, op. cit., citing a statement by Teilhard dated October 14, 1952.

[59] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 57.

[60] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 231.

[61] Crespy, op. cit., pp. 91-92, citing "Comment je vois."

God is not responsible for evil. It is a by-product of evolution. The possibility of evil appears with creation (the appearance of the multiple). The multiple moves toward unification. On the physical level, evil is simply a lack of unification. On the moral level, the level of freedom, it is the intentional opposition to unification. He pointed out the dual influence of chance and freedom upon the cosmic movement. Chance is the predominant influence at the bottom of the evolutionary scale and freedom at the top.[62] Evil is a statistical necessity as the evolutionary process moves toward maturation. He suggested:

> Not because of any lack of power on his part . . . but rather in virtue of the very structure of the Nothingness over which he leans to create, God can proceed in but one fashion: arranging, unifying little by little under his power of attraction, utilizing the groping play of large numbers, an immense multitude of elements. . . . Now, what is the inevitable counterpart of any success scored according to a procedure of this kind? Surely it is that the success must be paid for by a certain proportion of inevitable wastage! Dishormonies or decompositions in the Pre-Animate, pain and suffering in the Animate, sin in the realm of Freedom; here can be no forming order which does not imply, at all levels of formation, some disorder. . . . The Manifold, pure and utterly unorganized, is not evil in itself; but because it is manifold and, therefore, essentially subject to the interplay of chance in its arrangements, it is absolutely incapable of progressing toward unity without engendering (however free it may be) some Evil here or there, by statistical necessity. . . . If . . . our reason sees that there is but one way in which God can create, i.e., evolutively, by way of unification, then Evil is an inevitable by-product and shows itself to be a penalty inseparable from Creation.[63]

In Teilhard's thought, the power of God is revealed basically as a power of union, ordering, or arrangement. Evil has its source in the movement through which the world achieves unity under the influence of God. It can occur as disharmony, pain and suffering, or sin, depending on the level of complexity of the ordered matter involved. God had to make a universe in which suffering is the natural condition of life and progress.[64] Suffering and sin are the condition and price of evolution.[65] He concluded:

---

[62] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 308.

[63] Smulders, op. cit., pp. 152-153, citing "Comment je vois."

> If God letsus suffer, search, doubt, it is that He cannot, now and in one stroke, heal us and show Himself to us. And if He cannot, it is uniquely, because we are still incapable, on account of the state in which the Universe finds itself, to receive more light. In the course of a creation which is developing in time, Evil seems to be inevitable, even to God. Here again the liberating solution is given to us by Evolution.[66]

Theoretically, evil, in the form of injustice, inequality, suffering, and even death, ceases to be "outrageous" in a cosmogenesis. In such a world, evil is the inevitable condition, or price, of an immense victory.[67] A world in evolution is no longer viewed as a meaningless prison in which men must suffocate. There is hope for an ultimate victory--a way out. Moral confusion ends when life is shown to have an objective.

The first act of God is to struggle against evil and minimize even the physical evil which intimidates man. "It would be impossible to conceive Him," said Teilhard, "and still more impossible to love

---

[64] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 74. Some critics object to Teilhard's suggestion that God had to do anything.

[65] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Atomisme de l'esprit," AE, p. 57.

[66] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 48.

[67] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 90.

Him, under any other form."[68] In man, evolution must make its own choice regarding co-operation with God.[69] It must choose between revolt and adoration.[70] Teilhard granted that the temptation to revolt changes and grows with the intellect. This temptation has never been more acute than today.[71] In elaborating on this view of sin as statistically inevitable, Teilhard suggested a direction of thought in relation to original sin:

> Let us mention here the principle of a simple and fruitful interpretation of original sin--the necessity of Baptism (theological necessity) being explained by the solidarity of all men in the womb of one single Mankind (impregnated with sin by statistical necessity), where the collective bonds are revealed as being still more real and still deeper-cutting than any other liaison of a strictly and 'linearly' hereditary sort between individuals.[72]

He searched along these lines for an answer to the problem. However, he never seemed to be quite satisfied with this solution. In all his attempts to deal with the subject, he renewed his assertion of the universal necessity of redemption and baptism and suggested that this reveals the universal character of sin.

---

[68] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 56. See also Crespy, op. cit., p. 91, citing "Comment je vois": "We take the position that, for God, to be in opposition to the manifold is to be engaged in battle with evil, the 'shadow of creation.'"

[69] Teilhard de Chardin, "Place de la technique dans une biologie générale de l'humanité," AE, p. 168.

[70] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Evolution de la responsibilite dans le monde," AE, pp. 211-221. See also PM, p. 288. Teilhard consistently retained the possibility of an evil choice and a tragic consequence.

[71] Teilhard de Chardin, "Hominization," VP, pp. 74-75.

[72] Smulders, op. cit., p. 163, citing "Comment je vois."

He recognized that the statistical law of sin could account only for a given percentage of evil in the world. He wrote:

> Suffering and failure, tears and blood: so many by-products . . . begotten by the noosphere on its way. This, in final analysis is, what the spectacle of the world in movement reveals to our observation and reflection at the first stage. But is that really all? Is there nothing else to see? In other words, is it really sure that, for an eye trained and sensitised by light other than that of pure science, the quantity and the malice of evil _hic et nunc_, spread through the world, does not betray a certain _excess_, inexplicable to our reason, if to _the normal effect of evolution_ is not added the _extraordinary effect_ of some catastrophe or primordial deviation?[73]

Here, Teilhard wrote from an apologetic viewpoint, which justifies the questioning form of his remark. From this point of view, he noted that he was in no position to take a stand. Here, he would give complete liberty to theology, that it may add precision and depth to the discoveries and suggestions provided by experience, for they are always ambiguous beyond a certain point.[74] "By revealing an original fall," he noted, "Christianity provides our intelligence with a reason for the disconcerting excess of sin and suffering at certain points."[75] Elsewhere, he asserted that as the result of original sin, matter represents a perpetual aspiration toward failure. But as the result of the Incarnation it contains the spur or allurement "to be our accomplice towards heightened being, and this counterbalances and even dominates the _formes peccati_."[76]

Teilhard attempted to universalize original sin. He first identified it with the imperfection of the physical world at the instant of creation. He then identified it with the unavoidable presence of physical evil within the evolutionary process which followed. It became, then, the "cosmic fundament" of moral evil, rather than its "historical actuation," which occurred only with the appearance of fully responsible human action.[77] Obviously, Teilhard's general view of sin differed from the traditional approach of the church. He ignored the view that original sin originated from an historical sin committed by an individual named Adam and that we receive it because of our descent from him. He did indeed recognize the reality of the tragic; however, he chose to emphasize the positive aspects of evolution. This basic decision was made in light of what he considered the apologetic situation--one pervaded by a spirit of pessimism, lack of hope, and boredom. He chose as an act of faith to regard evil as a reality which is swallowed up in Christ's victory.[78] As an apologist to an agnostic scientific community, he tended to view evil more in quantitative than qualitative terms. Here, his apologetic purpose tended to interfere with good theological judgment. His view of sin and evil has been the object of much criticism.[79] However, one must keep in mind his apologetic and polemical stance. In a spirit of fairness, one must also recognize that his views in this area are always presented in tentative terms. He thought of himself as a searcher, rather than a teacher.[80] Yet, this does not excuse a basic weakness in his thought. In his effort to make Christianity as appealing as possible to the unbeliever, he distorted, by his unbalanced emphasis, the Christian understanding of sin.

---

[73] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 313. [74] _Ibid_.

[75] Teilhard de Chardin, _DM_, p. 77. [76] _Ibid_., p. 83.

---

[77] Mooney, op. cit., p. 141, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay "Le Christ évoluteur."

[78] Ibid., p. 202, Mooney criticizes Teilhard for not emphasizing the personal aspects of sin.

[79] Smulders, op. cit., p. 141, considers it the weakest point in his thought and an area in which he risked doing an injustice to the doctrine of the Catholic faith.

Cross and resurrection. The acceptance of the reality of the cross is included and assumed in Teilhard's thought. He wrote:

> It is important to remember . . . that the supernatural awaits and sustains the progress of our nature. But it must not be forgotten that it purifies and perfects that progress, in the end, only in an apparent annihilation. The inseparable alliance between the two terms, personal progress and renunciation in God; but also the continual, and then final, ascendency of the second over the first--it is these that sum up the full meaning of the mystery of the Cross.[81]

For him, the "royal road of the Cross" is the road of human endeavor, which has been righted and prolonged supernaturally.[82] He insisted that through his Incarnation, Christ automatically accepted as a cross the burden of human division and the role of re-establishing its unity. The role of the man who would follow Christ is also a way of the cross. There is sufficient room in Teilhard's thought for asceticism, victory over self, and acceptance of a cross, in that anyone who is involved in a creative work knows the meaning of suffering and sorrow. He regarded all work which is done in co-operation with God as a holy work. In serving human progress, one co-operates with the creative will of God which is guiding man forward. It is one's Christian duty to struggle against such things as sickness, death, misery, ignorance, and anything unworthy of man. The Christian must be prepared to submit to the inevitable and accept the cross, but such submission and acceptance should prevail only after a fight to the finish against the destructive forces of the world.

---

[80] Fleming, op. cit., p. 36, citing a letter by Teilhard dated April 28, 1954.

[81] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 76. [82] Ibid., p. 78.

The highest energy of the universe is that of the Cross of Jesus. His cross, Teilhard wrote, "is the symbol and the focus of an action whose intensity is inexpressible."[83] Teilhard's last word in _The Phenomenon of Man_ related to the cross: "Even in the view of a mere biologist, the human epic resembles nothing so much as a way of the Cross."[84] He declared:

> Jesus on the Cross is both the symbol and the reality of the immense labour of the centuries which has, little by little, raised up the created spirit and brought it back to the depths of the divine context. He represents (and in a true sense, He is) creation, as, sustained by God, it re-ascends the slopes of being, sometimes clinging to things for support, sometimes tearing itself from them in order to transcend them, and always compensating, by physical suffering, for the setbacks caused by its moral downfalls.
>
> The Cross is therefore not inhuman but superhuman. We can now understand that from the very first, from the very origins of mankind as we know it, the Cross was placed on the crest of the road which leads to the highest peaks of creation. But, in the growing light of revelation, its arms, which at first were bare, show themselves to have put on Christ: _Crux inuncta_. At first sight the bleeding body may seem mournful to us. Is it not from the night that it shines forth? But if we go nearer we shall recognise the flaming Seraphim of Alvernus whose passion and compassion are _incendium mentis_. The Christian is not asked to swoon in the shadow, but to climb in the light, of the Cross.[85]

---

[83] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Signification et la valeur constructrice de la souffrance," _EH_, p. 65.

[84] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 313.

[85] Teilhard de Chardin, _DM_, p. 79.

In the modern world, the biblical affirmation of the intrinsic goodness of creation needs to be recovered. The message of suffering and the Cross should be preached only in harmonious balance with the message of life. Teilhard recognized the need for such an emphasis. Simultaneously, he attempted to retain both poles, though paradoxical in nature, which are essential to the Christian attitude, Smulders notes--"the renunciation of the world and of self, combined with the joyous Amen, full of hope, spoken to the earth and to the whole of God's creation."[86]

Through the Cross and resurrection, Christ becomes truly universal. He cannot sanctify the spirit, said Teilhard, "without (as the Greek Fathers intuitively perceived) uplifting and saving the totality of matter."[87] The universal Christ, an expansion of the Jesus of history, becomes universal, said Teilhard, "to the full extent of Christian needs, and in conformity with the deepest aspirations of our age the Cross becomes a Symbol, the Way, the very Act of progress."[88]

---

[86] Smulders, op. cit., p. 216.

[87] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 94.

[88] Ibid., pp. 94-95. He thought of the resurrection as the threshold of the expansion of the Jesus of history into the universal Christ, in "Le Coeur de la matière," 1950, cited in HU, pp. 150-151: "In the guise of a tiny baby in its mother's arms, obeying the great laws of birth and infancy, you came, Lord Jesus, to dwell in my infant-soul; and then, as you re-enacted in me--and in so doing extended the range of--your growth through the Church, that same humanity which once was born and dwelt in Palestine began now to spread out gradually everywhere like an iridescence of unnumbered hues through which, without destroying anything, your presence penetrated--and endued with supervitality--every other presence about me.

And all this took place because, in a universe which was disclosing itself to me as structurally convergent, you, by right of your resurrection, had assumed the dominating position of all-inclusive Centre in which everything is gathered together."

Christ has defeated death by reversing its sting and suppressing its evil effects. He noted, "By virtue of the Resurrection, nothing any longer kills inevitably but everything is capable of becoming the blessed touch of the divine hands, the blessed influence of the will of God upon our lives."[89]

Redemption and grace. Mooney correctly notes that the dogmatic foundation for Teilhard's theological inquiry is "the Resurrection of Christ, in which all humanity is destined to participate by reason of Christ's union with human nature at the Incarnation."[90]

"The notion of grace impregnates the whole atmosphere of my book," Teilhard said in The Divine Milieu.[91] He assumed the activity of grace everywhere. During World War I, he wrote from the front:

> For peace, as for the longing of God, we're completely dependent on grace. To me, it's like the state of an object illuminated by a searchlight: it can't force the beam either to fall on it or to continue to do so.--We, however, can ask for the light and, . . . be certain that it will not leave us.[92]

In November, 1917, he wrote, "Being destined for Christ is an unexpected and gratuitous favour of the Creator."[93]

Teilhard thought of the redemptive work of Christ in these terms:

> Unquestionably Jesus is still he who bears the sins of the world; in its own mysterious way suffering makes reparation for moral

---

[89] Ibid., p. 55. [90] Mooney, op. cit., p. 61.

[91] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 12. [92] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 197.

[93] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Union créatrice," ET, p. 195. See also HU, p. 144. Here he maintained that out of the Incarnation, "a new life was born: that unforeseeable aggrandizement and 'obediential' extension of our natural capacities which we call 'grace'. Now grace is the sap which, rising in the one trunk, spreads through all the veins in obedience to the pulsations of the one heart; it is the nerve-impulse flowing through all the members at the command of the one brain; and the radiant Head, the mighty Heart, the fruitful Tree are, of necessity, Christ."

> evil. But above all Jesus is he who overcomes structurally, in himself and in behalf of us all, that resistance to spiritual ascent which is inherent in matter. He is the One who bears the weight which is inevitably part of all created reality. He is both symbol of progress and at the same time its heroic achievement. The full and ultimate meaning of redemption is no longer seen to be reparation alone, but rather further passage and conquest.[94]

In 1951, he concluded, in the same vein, that it is not sufficient that Christ merely sanctify in a supernatural way a harvest of souls. It is imperative that he also, in the same movement, "bear creatively the cosmic Noogenesis to the natural term of its maturity."[95]

Teilhard struggled with the question of whether salvation should be considered basically as a reparation for sin or as the elevation of creation in such a way that it will find its fulfilment in union with God. Should Christ the Redeemer be conceived primarily as Christ the Evolver?[96] While he did not neglect the matter of individual salvation, his greatest emphasis lay in the direction of cosmic redemption.[97] He wrote:

> In presenting the Christian doctrine of salvation, it must not be forgotten that the world, taken as a whole, that is to say in so far as it constitutes a hierarchy of souls . . . undergoes a sort of vast 'ontogenesis' in which the development of each soul, assisted by sensible realities, is but a diminished harmonic. Beneath our individual strivings towards spiritualisation, the

---

[94] Mooney, op. cit., pp. 120-121, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Christologie et évolution," 1933.

[95] Teilhard de Chardin, "Du cosmos a la cosmogénèse," AE, p. 272.

[96] Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Christ évoluteur," Cahier V, pp. 24-26.

[97] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 78-79; "La Vie cosmique," ET, p. 56; "La Signification et la valeur constructrice de la souffrance," EH, pp. 65-66.

> world slowly accumulates, starting with the whole of matter, that which will make of it the Heavenly Jerusalem or the New Earth.[98]

He concluded, in the kind of world we live in Christ "cannot sanctify the Spirit without . . . uplifting and saving the totality of Matter."[99]

Throughout his writings, Teilhard emphasized collective salvation; however, he did not neglect, or in any sense reject, individual salvation.[100] He asserted, "With God as our ally we are always certain of saving our souls."[101] Though he did not often use traditional theological terminology in his writing, he did advocate many traditional ideas. He urged such ideas as repentance and conversion in these terms:

> The aggregation of a monad to Christ presupposes a kind of internal disaggregation, disengagement and break up within the monad itself, that is a recasting of its whole being, as condition of its recreation and integration into the Pleroma. Union with Christ by mandate presupposes that we reposition in Him the ultimate center of our existence, which means the radical sacrifice of egoism.[102]

His work deals more with the universal or cosmic implications of theology for evolution than with its implications for individual men. However, this can be attributed to the apologetic method which he chose. It limited him to emphasizing only certain aspects of the mysteries involved. Teilhard's theology is more incomplete than erroneous in this regard.

---

[98] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 29-30.

[99] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 94.

[100] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 269; DM, p. 122; "The Heart of the Problem," FM, p. 269.

[101] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 57.

[102] Smulders, op. cit., p. 126, citing Teilhard de Chardin, dairy entry of December 12, 1919, Archives de philosophie, XXIV (1961), 135.

Teilhard believed in an ultimate victory for humanity. He did not fervently believe in ultimate victory for each individual man, although it was his hope that all men should be saved.[103] He accepted salvation by grace rather than works. For him, man's work is an expression of the Word of God working through him from below.[104] The great problem which evolution presents to us is that it seems to save mankind. However, Teilhard neither replaced nor eliminated salvation in the Christian sense of the word. The grace of Christ alone saves, although grace effectively makes use of evolution.[105] He accepted salvation by grace, rooted in the interplay between divine love and human freedom; but he did not develop his thought in this direction.

It was Teilhard's intuition that the mystery of the world can be explained in terms of its Center. He noted, "An outlet appears at the peak of Time, not only for our hope of escape but for our expectation of revelation."[106] The outlet is what is lacking in Marxism. Teilhard's outlet is Omega, which he conceived as the meeting point between a universe which has attained the limit of centration, and a deeper, "self-subsistent center and absolutely final principle of irreversibility and personalisation."[107] It is at this point that the problem of God enters the science of evolution.

---

[103] At this point Teilhard's critics differ in their interpretation of his thought. Murray, op. cit., pp. 100-101, accuses him of tending towards universalism, while Smulders, op. cit., p. 148, and Mooney, op. cit., p. 124, do not so interpret him.

[104] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 111; see also p. 23.

[105] Rabut, op. cit., p. 167.

[106] Teilhard de Chardin, "The End of the Species," FM, p. 303.

[107] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 121.

Christ as Alpha and Omega. The Omega of evolution is the Christ in his fullness at the Parousia. He acts as the focal point for three concentric centers at the peak of the cone of time. The exterior center is the immanent, natural summit of the humano-cosmic cone. Within this is the supernatural, immanent summit of the Church cone, or the humano-Christic cone. At the heart of the Omega Point is the transcendent center which is trinitarian and divine.[108] The Omega Point is reached by the completion and maturation of Christ's mystical Body. This is the precondition, not the cause, of the Parousia. Ultimately, the unity of mankind in mutual love cannot be achieved without a corresponding union of love with God. At Omega Point Teilhard's science is enlivened and completed by a spirituality.

It was Teilhard's apologetic purpose to identify the goal of the cosmos with the goal of salvation. Everything which has preceded in his argument has been but a prelude to this moment of identification. He sought to show that the universe has meaning because the cosmic Christ, an expansion of the Jesus of history, is both its driving force and focal point. He concluded:

> It is under the illuminative influence of grace that our mind recognizes, in the unitive character of the Christian phenomenon, a manifestation (reflection) of Omega upon the human

---

[108] Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'une dialectique de l'esprit," AE, p. 156. See also "Life and the Planets," FM, p. 122; DM, p. 91: "God reveals Himself everywhere, beneath our groping efforts, as a universal milieu, only because he is the ultimate point upon which all realities converge." On the transcendence of Omega, see HU, p. 31; "Appendix: The Nature of the Point Omega," AM, p. 273: "To what extent . . . will humanity, in order to attain further co-reflexion and union, be led progressively to distinguish (outside all philosophy and for bio-genetic purposes) an 'amorising' kernel of the transcendent in the centre of an Omega at first regarded as simply immanent?"

> consciousness, and it identifies the Omega of reason with the universal Christ of revelation.[109]

He saw, and tried to convince others, that the ultra-human perfection prognosticated by neo-humanism for evolution will ultimately and concretely coincide with the crowning of the Incarnation which all Christians await.[110] The effectiveness of his apologetic may be measured by the degree to which he was successful in this effort.

II. THE SPIRIT AND THE FATHER

Teilhard contended that the world needs a God and that one's concept of God must be enlarged as the size of his world is enlarged.[111] In our modern world the problem of God is one which can only be approached by the combined effort of human research and experience. On the one hand, God extends lasting value to the efforts of man. On the other hand, his revelation constitutes a response to the totality of that effort.[112]

The personality of God, as well as the survival of the spirit, is a problem for modern science to accept.[113] Teilhard maintained,

---

[109] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Pensée du P. Teilhard de Chardin par lui-meme," *Les Études philosophiques*, X (1955), 581. See also "Social Heredity and Progress," *FM*, p. 34: "Instead of the vague centre of convergence envisaged as the ultimate end of this process of evolution, the personal and defined reality of the Word Incarnate, in which everything acquires substance appears and takes its place." He further made this identification in *HB*, p. 42, and "Super-humanité, super-Christ, super-charité," *SC*, pp. 210-212. He not only identified the Christ with Omega, but he saw in him the Alpha as well. See "Note sur le Christ-universal," *SC*, p. 31; "Science et Christ ou analyse et synthèse," *SC*, p. 60; "Esquisse d'un univers personnel," *EH*, p. 113.

[110] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," *FM*, p. 268.

[111] Teilhard de Chardin, *LT*, p. 168. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

[113] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Esprit de la terre," *EH*, p. 55.

"God is a person. God is a person. We must think of him as we do of a person. A God not a person would not be God."[114]

For finite man, God is eternal discovery and growth. He does not reveal himself as completed.[115] God is the Absolute who attracts man; yet, at the same time, he remains hidden. In order to see his face, answer his call and understand his meaning, and learn to live more, man must plunge into the immense current of things.[116] God does not purposely hide himself, he concluded;

> Quite the contrary, bent over the Creation which mounts to Him, He works with all His force to beatify and illuminate it. Like a mother, He watches His newly born. But our eyes are not able to see Him. Is not the whole duration of the centuries necessary in order that our sight may be opened to the light?[117]

God is hidden only to the extent that man, in his finitude, is incapable of receiving his revelation and illumination.

Although Teilhard was a trinitarian Christian, he couched his thought primarily in terms of Christology. He made no clear distinction in his writings between the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit. However, in his defense, it might be observed that his distinction is often not clear in the New Testament. Therefore, it is quite possible to think of most experiences of God's activity in terms of the Christ without denying the validity of equally valid thought which gives a larger role to the Holy Spirit. Critics who attack Teilhard at this point try to make it an either/or proposition, when in reality it is not.

---

[114] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 244, citing Teilhard.

[115] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 119.

[116] de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning, p. 141, citing "La Vie cosmique."

[117] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 48.

Teilhard maintained that God exists through a unifying action.[118] He encompasses a trinitarian relation within himself, since being cannot be conceived apart from its unitive movement. God is "defined" in terms of the relations within the Trinity, and these relations remain circumscribed by an aura of mystery. Rust has correctly suggested that if we are to comprehend the person of the Holy Spirit some social understanding of the Trinity appears necessary.[119] The biblical threefold disclosure of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit suggests a divine plurality in unity. Teilhard adequately embraced the biblical message at this point. For him, it is God's Holy Spirit which empowers man to turn towards the Christ and embrace him in faith. The Holy Spirit provides a new axis for man's life by pointing him to God in Christ. For Teilhard, the Trinity is the theological foundation which, though not often specifically mentioned, sustains his whole edifice.

God is confronted in the created order.[120] He sanctifies human effort and humanizes the Christian life.[121] He is omnipresent. To perceive this involves a "seeing," or intuition. It cannot be understood through any process of reasoning or ingenuity.[122] Teilhard's emphasis was predominantly upon God's immanence. He advocated a

---

[118] Crespy, op. cit., p. 88, citing "Comment je vois."

[119] Rust, "The Holy Spirit, Nature, and Man," op. cit., p. 161.

[120] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 89. [121] Ibid., p. 34.

[122] Ibid., p. 111. For further elaboration on God's immanence, see DM, p. 91; "L'Énergie humaine," EH, p. 183.

"Christian pantheism," which he derived from the Pauline and Johannine writings of the New Testament.[123] He considered this a legitimate kind of pantheism, based on revelation. He defended himself in this fashion:

> How can we fail to see that, in the case of a converging universe such as I have delineated, far from being born from the fusion and confusion of the elemental centres it assembles, the universal centre of unification . . . must be conceived as pre-existing and transcendent. A very real 'pantheism' if you like (in the entymological meaning of the word) but an absolutely legitimate pantheism--for it, in the last resort, the reflective centres of the world are effectively 'one with God', this state is obtained not by identification (God becoming all) but by the differentiating and communicating action of love (God all in everyone). And that is essentially orthodox and Christian.[124]

He noted that the inhabitant of the divine milieu is not a pantheist in the ordinary sense of the word.[125]

The transcendence of God was not neglected in Teilhard's writings.[126] It must be noted that his stronger emphasis upon God's immanence derives from his apologetic purpose. The starting point in speaking to an agnostic or atheist must be with the immanent, generally speaking, rather than the transcendent; otherwise, there is no real point of common understanding. Teilhard's apologetic seeks to lead one from the immanent to the transcendent.

---

[123] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 93.

[124] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 309-310. See also p. 294, and "Pour y voir clair," AE, p. 234.

[125] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 93. Philosophically, Teilhard was an immanent theist. He maintained both the immanence and transcendence of God in relation to the world. This differs from pantheism in that he did not identify God's essence with that of the world.

[126] There are numerous references in his works to God's transcendence. Among them, see "Esquisse d'une Dialectique de l'Esprit," AE, p. 152; "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 80; "Turmoil or Genesis?," p. 224; MM, p. 98.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Faith and election. In 1936, Teilhard wrote that he believed in God probably to a greater extent than ever before.[127] He recognized that men are forced to fall back on intuition in regard to faith in God.[128] In other words, Christian faith was for him a commitment awakened in the individual through an illumination, or disclosure, which centers in Christ. Faith had no relation to natural theology, or any attempt to reach God by human reason.

Faith in God involves a faith in man.[129] It "sublimates in us a rising tide of human aspirations,"[130] he wrote. It is to that faith that one must return if he would communicate with his fellow men with whom he seeks to be united. One's faith in God also involves a faith in the world. However, the former is far more profound than the latter. "Faith in God re-emerges and persists," he said, "even if our faith in the world should be crushed by the impact of events."[131]

Teilhard wrote to a cousin in 1918, "Faith is the element that stabilizes and divinizes our future,--it creates it, for each one of us, to the measure of our own salvation and our own particular chosen destiny."[132] He understood faith as a matter of personal trust and commitment. In The Divine Milieu, he said:

> Faith, as we understand it here, is not--of course--simply the intellectual adherence to Christian dogma. It is taken in a much richer sense to mean belief in God charged with all the

---

[127] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 7.

[128] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 276.

[129] Barbour, op. cit., p. 126, citing a letter from Teilhard.

[130] Teilhard de Chardin, "Faith in Man," FM, p. 192.

[131] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 99. [132] Ibid., p. 232.

> trust in His beneficent strength that the knowledge of the divine Being arouses in us. It means the practical conviction that the universe, between the hands of the Creator, still continues to be the clay in which He shapes innumerable possibilities according to His will. In a word, it is evangelical faith, of which it can be said that no virtue, not even charity, was more strongly urged by the Saviour.[133]

Faith is the gift of God.[134] It emerges under the influence of grace.[135] Faith is certainly rational; but it is more than rational. Teilhard, as an apologist, sought to reveal the rational invitations to faith--to reveal the paths which lead from a panoramic vision of the world to a religious faith. He could not be content with doing less; neither could he do any more. Reason can never compel faith in God--there are only rational invitations to that faith. However, Teilhard was well aware that a faith which is unreasonable cannot stand for long.

A concept of election is at work everywhere in Teilhard's writings. There is in the totality of the world a certain amount of spiritual power which is in a process of progressive sublimation in Christ. A chosen part of matter is involved in each upward and forward step of evolution. This is for the purpose of raising the universe to a higher level of organization. In keeping with this principle, the mammals emerged in the tree of life. In turn, a certain branch of the mammals issued into manhood; a particular nation emerged as God's chosen people, through the function of a particular chosen prophet.

---

[133] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 114-115. [134] Ibid., p. 111.

[135] Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'une dialectique de l'esprit," AE, p. 155.

In a sense, a "purification" of matter is taking place. At each level, the chosen part which is transferred into a higher level of being has as its purpose the salvation of the remainder. God's purpose for Israel was to illumine the paths of their neighbors to him. The ultimate example of this principle may be found in God's elect in Jesus Christ. As a servant, he underwent the sacrificial progress through death and resurrection. Through this progression, all the people of God will be elevated to eternal life in him. Consistent with this principle, the Church, which is composed of God's elect, is a community whose purpose is to function as the servant and representative of God in the salvation of the world.[136] "One day," he said, "the whole divinisable substance of matter will have passed into the souls of men; all the chosen dynamisms will have been recuperated: and then our world will be ready for the Parousia."[137] The completion of the Incarnation will have been achieved only when the chosen substance incorporated in every object, said Teilhard, "has rejoined the final Centre of its completion."[138] By virtue of the Creation and Incarnation, nothing in the universe is profane, providing one knows how to see. "On the contrary," Teilhard concluded, "everything is sacred to those capable of distinguishing that portion of chosen being which is subject to the attraction of Christ in the process of consummation.[139]

---

[136] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 85. Here he suggested that it is the task of the Body of Christ to sort out the heavenly forces that are still diffused throughout the world and to extricate that "chosen" substance without losing any of it. This work is being accomplished gradually through the Spirit of God and with the help of dedicated individuals. See ibid., p. 128: "The history of the Kingdom of God is, directly, one of a reunion. The total divine milieu is formed by the incorporation of every elected spirit in Jesus Christ. But to say 'elect' is to imply a choice, a selection. We should not be looking at the universal action of Jesus from a fully Christian point of view if it were seen merely as a centre of attraction and beatification. It is precisely because He is the One who unites that He is also the One who separates and judges. The Gospel speaks of the good seed, the sheep, the right hand of the Son of Man, the wedding feast and the fire that kindles joy. But there are also the tares, the goats, the left hand of the Judge, the closed door, the outer darkness; and, at the antipodes of the fire that unites in love, there is the fire that destroys in isolation. The whole process out of which the New Earth is gradually born is an aggregation increased two-fold by a segregation." Ibid., p. 76, he views the cross as a principle of selection: "The Cross has always been a symbol of conflict, and a principle of selection, among men. The Faith tells us that it is by the willed attraction or repulsion exercised upon souls by the Cross that the sorting of the good seed from the bad, the separation of the chosen elements from the unutilisable ones, is accomplished at the heart of mankind." The inner paradox of man's encounter with God is that while he is drawn by the attractive force of God he still has the power to decide. He is elected; yet he is a free, responsible being.

Soul. Teilhard was concerned about the creation of the individual soul. He knew that many Christians are convinced that the superiority of spirit would be placed in jeopardy, were its first appearance not accompanied by an interruption of some sort in the normal course of evolution. However, he contended, precisely because it is spirit, its appearance is rather a crowning, or blossoming. Continuously, human souls are created in the progress of an embryogenesis which is so unbroken that scientific observation will never be able to find even a minute break in the chain of biological phenomena. In the birth process one can observe an example of a creation which is imperceptible to pure science.[140]

---

[137] Ibid., p. 86. [138] Ibid., p. 30. [139] Ibid., p. 35.

[140] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 135.

The transformist, as opposed to the fixist, understands of the human soul that it has been both specially and uniquelly willed. God has not cast it into a world which is ill-prepared to receive it. He caused it to be born initially; and he unceasingly causes it to be born through a harmonious action geared to the development of the cosmos from the very beginning.[141] The human soul has a clearly defined place in the gradual ascent of life towards consciousness; and it has emerged out of the general movement of things.[142] Teilhard questioned:

> Why not admit . . . that the absolutely free and special action by which the Creator decided that humanity should crown His work so influenced and preorganized the course of the world before man, that he now appears to us (as a result of the Creator's choice) to be the fruit naturally expected by the developments of life?[143]

He suggested, on the one hand, that man appears in the world as a superior form of animal life which is so closely connected to the inferior forms below it that a discontinuity cannot be observed. On the other hand, the human soul is a new creation in God's image. In other words, he insisted that man is a product of evolution, while further insisting that his appearance signals a new and superior degree of being.[144] His thought, far from denying the creation of the individual soul, includes this concept. His position need not conflict with Christian theology at this point.[145]

---

[141] Ibid., p. 136.

[142] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 13.

[143] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 135.

[144] Smulders, op. cit., p. 77; Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 169; Here he suggested that there is ample room beneath the phenomenal veil for God's creative intervention.

Teilhard offered an apologetic to the Marxist and positivist understanding of man in his discussion of the spiritual nature of the soul. The key to the understanding of man lies in the spiritual nature of his soul, not in the stages of his embryonic development. The soul always eludes the observations of science, with its desire to analyze things by breaking them down into their component parts. The soul can only be discovered by intuition and philosophic reflection. Therefore, those who insist that man is an exclusively material being, because increasingly they are able to find deeper and more numerous earthly roots, are in error. Their efforts reveal rather how spirit is interwoven with, and acts upon matter like leaven. Teilhard concluded, "Let us not play this game by supposing as they do that for a being to come from heaven we must know nothing of the earthly conditions of his origin."[146]

Divinization of activity and passivity. In Teilhard's view, nothing is profane, or secular.[147] From an apologetic point of view, Christians need to humanize their sanctity, without perverting the doctrines they hold.[148] Men need to regain a zest for life. Teilhard was convinced that the key to human motivation is to be found in man's belief, however obscure it may be, that he is contributing in some way to the construction of an absolute--that is, to the work of God.[149] He was also convinced that man's efforts can be sanctified.[150] The function of the Christian is the divinization of the world in Christ.[151]

---

[145] Contrary to Leopold Malevez, "The Method of Teilhard and Phenomenology," Theology Digest, VIII (1960), 137.

[146] Teilhard de Chardin, HU, p. 78.

[147] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 31, 35, 71.

[148] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 222.

Contemporary man views this world as a field of strenuous work, rather than as an object of unobtrusive contemplation. Christianity must not inhibit his aspiration to elevate himself by his own powers. Rather, it must disclose a new meaning, a new attraction, a new enthusiasm to man. To contemporary and future man, Christianity is challenged to reveal how God can be encountered in man's world--a world fashioned and controlled by man himself. Teilhard sought a Christian experience relevant to modern man and his descendents. He probed for the path to the divinization of man's activity.

There exist in man certain longings which arise out of the source of his existence. There is the craving for happiness, the desire for immortality, the yearning for fulfillment, and the determination to subjugate the earth. These longings are the first law of man's being. God built them in his nature. Therefore, it is the responsibility of man to respond affirmatively to this law with the entire determination of his will. Teilhard sought to stimulate an awareness in contemporary man of this deep bias within his nature and the determination to be faithful to it.

Teilhard urged that man orient his being in the flux of things. He should throw himself into the things of earth and pursue his work with all his strength.[152] Here, the influence of Maurice Blondel upon him is graphically displayed.[153] For Teilhard, the success of man's individual efforts matters little. What really matters is that the effort be made. He asserted, "God can correct anything."[154] He contended that by actively committing oneself to the human effort his actions coincide with the creative power of God.[155] "Through our work," he concluded, "we complete in ourselves the subject of the divine union; and through it again we augment in some sense, in relation to ourselves, the divine end of that union, Our Lord Jesus Christ."[156]

---

[149] Teilhard de Chardin, _DM_, p. 24.

[150] _Ibid._, p. 18. [151] _Ibid._, p. 42.

There are groups within the Church who are dedicated to the practice of various virtues. Teilhard questioned:

> Why should there not be men vowed to the task of exemplifying, by their lives, the general sanctification of human endeavour?--men whose common religious ideal would be to give a full and conscious explanation of the divine possibilities or demands which any worldly occupation implies--men, in a word, who would devote themselves, in the fields of thought, art, industry, commerce and politics, etc., to carrying out, in the sublime spirit these demands, the basic tasks which form the very bonework of human society?[157]

In a sense, each man contructs a work in the course of his life. He "makes his own soul." Simultaneously, he co-operates in another work: the completion of the world.[158] Being committed to the reality of God's active presence in the world involves respecting the sense of longing deep within one's being. It is man's sacred duty to live and work to the limits of his capacity, for it is the will of God, who is Incarnate in the world and mankind. Thus, Teilhard's thought issues a call to action.

---

[152] *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 39, 84.

[153] de Lubac, *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning*, p. 68, citing Maurice Blondel, *Carnets intimes* (October 10, 1884), 85: "I want to show that the highest mode of being is action: that the most complete mode of action is suffering and love: that the true mode of loving is adherence to Christ."

[154] Teilhard de Chardin, *MM*, p. 68.

[155] Teilhard de Chardin, *DM*, p. 31. [156] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[157] *Ibid.*, p. 36. [158] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Half of our lives are composed of the passivities of existence. The passivities of life are those things which, rather than being done by us, are undergone.[159] Teilhard sought to show that the fear of diminishing oneself by pursuing the Gospel is unfounded.[160] The person who commits himself to human effort, in the Christian sense, though he may appear immersed in the concerns of the world, is actually a man of great detachment.[161] It is an erroneous interpretation of Christian resignation and detachment which is the basic source of the repugnance which causes many non-Christians genuinely to hate the Gospel.[162] In countering this distaste for the Gospel, Teilhard suggested:

> Your essential duty and desire is to be united with God. But in order to be united, you must first of all be--be yourself as completely as possible. And so you must develop yourself and take possession of the world in order to be. Once this has been accomplished, then is the time to think about renunciation; then is the time to accept diminishment for the sake of being in another. Such is the sole and two-fold precept of complete Christian asceticism.[163]

These are words of apologetic value. They appeal to the deep-seated desires of all men and are in harmony with the divine encouragement to subdue the earth.

---

[159] *Ibid.*, p. 46. [160] *Ibid.*, p. 11. [161] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[162] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[163] *Ibid.*, p. 70. See also *MM*, p. 147: "I've come to think that the only, the supreme, prayer, we can offer up . . . when the road before us is shrouded in darkness, is that of our Master on the Cross: '*In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*.'"

As Teilhard saw it, complete human endeavor consists in three things: (1) a passionate collaboration in the human effort in the belief that through the work realized, as well as through one's faithfulness and obedience, one is working for the completion of the Pleroma by bringing about its pre-conditions; (2) the achievement of a prefatory form of renunciation and of triumph over a narrow, lazy egoism, in the course of one's energetic effort and in the quest of an increasingly expanding ideal; and (3) the love and appreciation for the passivities and diminishments of life as well as its "fullnesses."[164]

Each soul exists for God in Christ. All reality exists for the souls of men. Therefore, all reality, even material reality, said Teilhard, "exists, through our souls, for God in Our Lord."[165]

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH: THE DIVINE MILIEU

__The phylum of love__. There are many who hold that the age of Christianity is passed and that something new in the field of religion must emerge to take its place. This is the modern challenge to the church. Teilhard contended that in order to match the new developments in the curve of Time Christianity is compelled to appreciate the values of the world below the level of God, while humanism must find room for God above the level of the world. These are movements which are both inverse and complementary. They are the two sides of one single event which is signaling a new era for mankind.[166]

---

[164] __Ibid__., p. 67. [165] __Ibid__., p. 25.

[166] Teilhard de Chardin, "The New Spirit, 1942," __FM__, pp. 93-96.

From an apologetic viewpoint, the only reason Teilhard could imagine for following a given religion was the existence of a harmony between that religion and the beliefs to which the evolution of his faith led him.[167] Only Christianity fulfils that criterion; therefore, it is superior to other religions. He concluded:

> What, when all is said and done, constitutes the invincible superiority of Christianity over every other type of faith is that it is becoming more and more conscious of being identified with a Christogenesis, i.e. with the rise, collectively recognized, of a certain universal Presence, at once immortalizing and unifying.[168]

It is the only religion which allows room for the creativity of the cosmic process as a whole; therefore, it alone can fit into a scientific world. Teilhard saw an eventual convergence of religions on the universal Christ, who is capable of satisfying them all. He concluded, "That seems to me the only possible conversion of the World, and the only imaginable form for a Religion of the future."[169]

Teilhard thought of the Church as the axis around which the human social organism is forming. Around it, the universal process of convergence is taking place. Within the Church is to be found the ultimate axis of evolution--love.[170] The Church, then is phylectically necessary to the consummation of the human.[171] The more Teilhard studied the life of the past in the light of paleontology, the more he was convinced that the irresistable cosmic process itself can attain its consummation only by becoming Christianized.[172]

---

[167] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, pp. 34-35.

[168] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 372, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Le Christique," 1955. "Man's Place in the Universe," VP, p. 232, he viewed Christianity as the most progressive religion. He pointed out the superiority of Christianity over the eastern religions in "Le Christianisme dans le monde," SC, pp. 137-141; "Pour y voir clair," AE, p. 227; HB, pp. 35-37.

[169] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, p. 46.

[170] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, p. 223; "Le Gout de Vivre," AE, p. 249; "L'Énergie humaine," EH, p. 194.

He asserted:

> Whatever the merits of other religions, it remains an undeniable fact--explain it how one will--that the most ardent and most massive blaze of collective love that has ever appeared in the world burns here and now in the heart of the Church of God.[173]

In biological terms, he thought of the Church as the phylum of love emerging within the human phylum.[174] He viewed Christian love as a new state of consciousness which has appeared in the cosmic process.[175] Its existence is an undeniable fact. It has existed in the mystics through twenty centuries; people are responding to it today; without it, the Church would collapse.[176] The Christian faith, the milieu of love, is not only necessary to evolution; but it also takes its place.[177]

---

[171] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 367, citing a letter by Teilhard, dated August 16, 1951.

[172] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 76.

[173] Teilhard de Chardin, HU, p. 155.

[174] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Énergie humaine," EH, pp. 194-195.

[175] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, pp. 295-296.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Ibid., p. 297. Mooney, op. cit., p. 153, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Christologie et évolution," 1933: Here Teilhard asserted, "Charity no longer demands that we merely bind up wounds; it urges us to build a better world here on earth and to be in the first ranks of every campaign for the full development of mankind."

He found the meaning of the universe hidden in the reality of love.[178] In Christian terms, he noted, "To love God and our neighbour . . . is Life itself."[179] He reached this conclusion:

> Christian charity . . . is nothing else than the more or less conscious cohesion of souls engendered by their communal convergence in Christo Jesu. It is impossible to love Christ without loving others. . . . And it is impossible to love others . . . without moving nearer to Christ. Hence automatically, by a sort of living determinism, the individual divine milieux, in proportion as they establish themselves, tend to fuse one with another; and in this association they find a boundless increase of their ardour.[180]

Christian love has the power to burst the envelope of individual isolation and lead towards the personalization of souls.[181] The Christian phenomenon confirms the personal nature of the universe's energy.[182]

The liberating spirit of the Church is inseparably bound to its existence in an institutional organization, he recognized, "whatever may be the vulgar corruptions and inconveniences inherent in this incorporation, Vatican intrigues or repository trash."[183] For this reason, he reminded within the institutional Church, and faithful to it, throughout his life.

The Body of Christ. Teilhard was a mystic. He often alluded to the mystical approach to reality. He asked, "How can we fail to be struck by the revealing growth around us of a strong mystical current, actually nourished by the conviction that the universe, . . . is ultimately lovable and loving?"[184] He was convinced that it is only the "science of Christ," the "true mystical science," that is important.[185] Mystical union may be considered "the strengthening and purification of the reality and urgency contained in the most powerful interconnections revealed to us in every order of the physical and human world."[186] Mankind as a whole is the only subject capable of mystical transformation, under the attractive power of Christ, into a single body and soul in love.[187] Only God can open our eyes to the sort of mysticism that makes one passionately seek God in the heart of every substance and action.[188] "We can only lose ourselves in God by prolonging the most individual characteristics of beings far beyond themselves,"[189] Teilhard concluded. By this fundamental rule, the true mystic can always be distinguished from his counterfeits. Teilhard contrasted oriental mysticism with Christianity. He pondered how one might move from the many to the one:

---

[178] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 117.

[179] Teilhard de Chardin, "Some Reflections on Progress," FM, p. 79.

[180] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 125. See also "The New Spirit, 1942," FM, p. 95.

[181] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 297: "I have tried to show that we can hope for no progress on earth without the primacy and triumph of a personal at the summit of mind."

[182] Ibid., pp. 292-299. [183] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, p. 143.

> It strikes me that there are two theoretical solutions (both of them attempted): the oriental (that we arrive at unity by

---

[184] Teilhard de Chardin, "Appendix: The Nature of the Point Omega," AM, p. 273.

[185] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, pp. 85-86; ibid., p. 87: "Mysticism remains the great science and the great art, the only power capable of synthesising the riches accumulated by other forms of human activity."

[186] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 26. [187] Ibid., p. 126.

[188] Teilhard de Chardin, MM, pp. 190-191.

[189] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 95.

> dissipating--through evasion or suppression--the illusion of the multiple) and the occidental--scarcely formulated yet, I should say--(that we arrive at unity through the effort of extending, in their proper direction, the potentialities--convergent by nature--of the multiple). Mysticism of detachment from things, or mysticism of passage via things? I think (it is my whole life) that presentday Christianity is tending towards the latter, in which the salvation of humanity consists.[190]

As Zaehner has noted, "To diminish as an ego, to grow as an organically interconnected cell--this is the essence of the mysticism of Teilhard de Chardin."[191]

The Church is in process of being formed through a kind of ultra-socialization within the heart of the social phenomenon.[192] The formation of the Church represents the process by which all the energies of the noosphere are being collected. The Church is the Christified part of the world, the focal point of inter-human relationships, the axis of cosmic convergence, the precise meeting point between the Universe and Omega Point.[193] Within the Church, in communion with others, the encounter of individuals with God is already taking place. The tension of the expectation of love which will eventually cause the spark to leap between heaven and earth is being gathered within the Church.[194]

The Church is the Body of Christ. The growth of the mystical Body of Christ is, from the Christian perspective, the one basic procedure taking place in evolution. It corresponds to the incorporation into Christ of the elect.[195] Man's efforts contribute to the building of Christ's mystical Body. Teilhard asserted, "The whole of the world's industrial, aesthetic, scientific and moral endeavour serves physically to complete the Body of Christ, whose charity animates and recreates all things."[196] Conversely, those who act to build the Body of Christ contribute to the progress of mankind. The Christian's contribution to human progress is not merely a matter of promoting a human work, but of achieving Christ in some way. Jesus Christ is the center of the cosmos; therefore, it is obviously necessary that collaboration in the future of the world is a necessary aspect of Christian responsibility. "In one and the same movement," Teilhard said, "nature grows toward fulfillment, and the Body of Christ achieves its complete development."[197] He argued that everything exists for man and his development. Man exists for the purpose of an ultimate incorporation into Christ. Therefore, everything exists for the purpose of man's incorporation into Christ--for the growth of the mystical Body of Christ. Teilhard prayed that eventually men of good will might realize that their assistance towards the development of human progress also builds the Body of Christ. Teilhard did not identify the progress of man in science, technology, and the like, with the growth of the Kingdom of God.

---

[190] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 141, citing a letter by Teilhard, dated May 22, 1932.

[191] Zaehner, op. cit., p. 208.

[192] Smulders, op. cit., pp. 239-240, citing "Comment je vois."

[193] Ibid., citing "Comment je vois."

[194] Ibid., p. 241, citing "Comment je vois."

---

[195] Teilhard de Chardin, _DM_, p. 124. Rust, _Towards a Theological Understanding of History_, p. 235, notes that the image of the Body of Christ conserves the idea of the Church's incorporation into Christ.

[196] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," _FM_, p. 23.

[197] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Vie cosmique," _ET_, p. 52.

Progress in these realms does not necessarily involve a union, through love, of men among one another in a mutual love of God, as does the Kingdom of God. Teilhard warned against seeking God's love and his Kingdom "on the same level" that one finds human affections and progress.[198] He suggested of the Kingdom of God:

> Those who fail to see it in [Christianity] . . . the most realistic and at the same time the most cosmic of beliefs and hopes completely fail to understand its 'mysteries'. Is the Kingdom of God a big family? Yes, in a sense it is. But in another sense it is a prodigious biological operation--that of the Redeeming Incarnation.[199]

God's Kingdom is within us. At the parousia, a metamorphosis which has been slowly achieved under the influence of Christ in the heart of mankind will be revealed. Teilhard urged his readers to hasten the coming of Christ by concentrating on a deeper understanding of the process by which the presence of God is born and develops within men.[200] He referred to the presence of God as the divine milieu.[201] The growth of the Kingdom of God is a process of reunion. The total divine milieu is composed of the elect who have been incorporated into Jesus Christ.[202]

The Eucharist was an essential element in Teilhard's religious life and thought. In "The Mass on the World," he sought to consecrate the cosmos to God. In keeping with his view of man as incorporating

---

[198] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 86. See also Smulders' valuable elaboration on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-227, 231-232. MM, p. 279, Teilhard said of the Kingdom of God: "One can conceive of the kingdom of God as cutting across the kingdom of man, going beyond it, integrating it, *without destroying it*."

[199] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 293.

[200] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 107-108; LT, p. 353.

[201] *Ibid.*, p. 99. [202] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Progress in these realms does not necessarily involve a union, through love, of men among one another in a mutual love of God, as does the Kingdom of God. Teilhard warned against seeking God's love and his Kingdom "on the same level" that one finds human affections and progress.[198] He suggested of the Kingdom of God:

> Those who fail to see it in [Christianity] . . . the most realistic and at the same time the most cosmic of beliefs and hopes completely fail to understand its 'mysteries'. Is the Kingdom of God a big family? Yes, in a sense it is. But in another sense it is a prodigious biological operation--that of the Redeeming Incarnation.[199]

God's Kingdom is within us. At the parousia, a metamorphosis which has been slowly achieved under the influence of Christ in the heart of mankind will be revealed. Teilhard urged his readers to hasten the coming of Christ by concentrating on a deeper understanding of the process by which the presence of God is born and develops within men.[200] He referred to the presence of God as the divine milieu.[201] The growth of the Kingdom of God is a process of reunion. The total divine milieu is composed of the elect who have been incorporated into Jesus Christ.[202]

The Eucharist was an essential element in Teilhard's religious life and thought. In "The Mass on the World," he sought to consecrate the cosmos to God. In keeping with his view of man as incorporating the spiritual elements of those levels below him in the evolutionary process, he saw that, for man, an absolute consecration of himself includes a consecration of the entire cosmos.[203] The Eucharist became the focus of his theology and cosmology. As Chauchard notes, "His work has as a substructure belief in the eucharist, a belief that induces the habit of seeing within accidental things the profoundest reality, the real presence."[204]

---

[198] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 86. See also Smulders' valuable elaboration on this point, op. cit., pp. 226-227, 231-232. MM, p. 279, Teilhard said of the Kingdom of God: "One can conceive of the kingdom of God as cutting across the kingdom of man, going beyond it, integrating it, without destroying it."

[199] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 293.

[200] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 107-108; LT, p. 353.

[201] Ibid., p. 99. [202] Ibid., p. 128.

V. THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

The Parousia. Teilhard was concerned that the doctrine of the pleroma is an element of the Christian revelation which has been practically ignored.[205] Karl Löwith has observed that "the flame of eschatology was kept alive in the nineteenth century not by liberal theologians but by 'atheists' like Proudhon, Marx, and Nietzsche."[206] Significantly, Teilhard emphasized this aspect of Christian doctrine. It became a valuable apologetic tool as he explored the hope of an ultimate reconciliation between Christianity and the Marxists.

Teilhard saw the genesis which is taking place in history as primarily a process of maturation directly related to the Second Coming of Christ.[207] All human effort contributes to this maturation.[208] The development of the human soul is intimately tied to the growth of the cosmos in which it has appeared. The growth of individual souls will ultimately, though slowly, renew the cosmos and transform it into the New Jerusalem.[209] Beneath the surface of things and through man's purified and salvaged efforts, the New Earth is slowly being generated. The tension between humanity and God is gradually building, and it will eventually reach the limits dictated by the possibilities of the world. The entire divinizable essence of matter will have been incorporated into the souls of men. The chosen dynamisms of the world will have been recuperated. At that time, the world will be prepared for the Parousia. Then the end will come. The Parousia will occur; and the presence of Christ, which has been silently and gradually building in things, will be abruptly revealed.[210]

---

[203] Teilhard de Chardin, HU, pp. 17-37; LT, p. 86; Smulders, op. cit., pp. 243 ff.

[204] Chauchard, Teilhard de Chardin on Love and Suffering, p. 13.

[205] Teilhard de Chardin, "La parole attendue," Cahier IV, pp. 26-27.

[206] Karl Löwith, Meaning in History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 65.

Teilhard never suggested a renovation of all things in their crude form. Renovation will come only to the extent that they have been humanized or incorporated into the being of man. He often reminded his readers that the development of mankind does not bring about the Second Coming of Christ. It is, however, a pre-condition to that event.[211] The Second Coming is the work of God alone, and it is the fulfillment of his grace. Just as a certain degree of social, political, and cultural maturation was necessary for Christ's first coming, a certain maturation is also necessary for the time to be right for his Second Coming. However, the union of mankind with God is not something which is achieved by man. It is bestowed upon him from above. The ultimate actualization of Omega, the Second Coming, the Parousia, is the sole work of God's grace, even though a certain historical preparation is a necessary pre-condition.

---

[207] Teilhard de Chardin, "L'Étoffe de l'univers," AE, p. 405. Here he noted that the Parousia will be more nearly a maturation than a destruction.

[208] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 71: "The effort of mankind, even in realms inaccurately called profane, must, in the Christian life, assume the role of a holy and unifying operation. It is the collaboration, trembling with love, which we give to the hands of God, concerned to attire and prepare us (and the World) for the final union through sacrifice." See also ibid., p. 31.

[209] Teilhard de Chardin, "A Note on Progress," FM, p. 23.

[210] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 86, 133; "Mon univers," FM, p. 307: "No doubt it is . . . in a Creation brought to the paroxysm of its aptitude for union, that the Parousia will occur. The unique process of assimilation and synthesis, pursued from the beginning of time, being at length revealed, the universal Christ will appear like a flash of lightning amid the storm-clouds of a slowly consecrated world."

The critical point of maturation predicted by science is the pre-condition and experimental aspect of the critical point of the Parousia revealed and awaited in the Christian religion.[212] As one turns toward the future and the summit of planetary maturation, he cannot avoid a confrontation with religion. "Religion and science are the two conjugated faces or phases of one and the same complete act of knowledge," Teilhard said, "the only one which can embrace the past and future of evolution so as to contemplate, measure, and fulfil them."[213] It is here, at the point of the Parousia, that the conjunction of reason and mysticism, the meeting point of science and Christian thought, occurs.

---

[211] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 237.

[212] Teilhard de Chardin, "Turmoil or Genesis?," FM, pp. 223-224.

[213] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 285.

The critical point of collective maturation will also be a point of paroxysm and ecstasy. Through this point, mankind will be directed into a degree of consciousness which is beyond the time-space matrix of the cosmos. This point coincides with the Parousia of Christ. It is in this ultimate event of the universe, he noted, "when, as faith tells us, history is to be welded to the Transcendent, that the mystery of the Incarnation culminates and asserts itself in the realism of a physical interpretation of the universe."[214] He urged that the end-point of creation should not be sought in the temporal zones of the visible world, concluding, "The effort required of our fidelity must be consummated beyond a total metamorphosis of ourselves and of everything surrounding us."[215]

In the consummation, the properties of our individual personalities will be preserved.[216] The only thing which will be excluded from the pleroma is sin.[217] The Parousia will be a point of intense concentration of human mind and spirit. It will also be the point of man's perfect ex-centration--a leap into God. At this point, God shall be all in all;[218] and the ultimate completion of the universe in God will be accomplished.[219]

---

[214] Mooney, op. cit., p. 182, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Trois choses que je vois," 1948. See also Teilhard de Chardin, "The Formation of the Noosphere," FM, p. 181.

[215] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 78.

[216] Teilhard de Chardin, HB, pp. 29-30.

[217] Teilhard de Chardin, HU, p. 153.

[218] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 294.

[219] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Parole attendue," Cahier IV, p. 26.

The end of the world will be the occasion for "the wholesale internal introversion upon itself of the noosphere, which has simultaneously reached the uttermost limit of its complexity and its centrality."[220] An overthrow of equilibrium will take place, "detaching the mind, fulfilled at last, from its material matrix, so that it will henceforth rest with all its weight on God-Omega."[221] It will be a "critical point simultaneously of emergence and emersion, of maturation and escape."[222]

Teilhard did not deny or reject the catastrophic nature of the consummation. He recognized the distinct possibility of conflict at that point, resulting from the possible simultaneous growth of good and evil in the evolutionary process. He also recognized the possibility of a consummation which would take place in an atmosphere of peace, in which physical and moral evil would be diminished to a minimum in the increasingly warmer radiance of Omega. Regardless of which possibility is ultimately realized, the consummation will take place in an atmosphere of excess tension, he noted, "the only biological outcome proper to or conceivable for the phenomenon of man."[223]

The ultimate dissolution of the bond between complexity and consciousness will occur at the Omega Point, releasing a thinking without brain.[224] The cosmos will disappear.[225] The salvation of mankind will take place, he said, "not in the direction of any temporo-spatial consolidation or expansion but by way of spiritual escape through the excess of consciousness. . . ."[226] Evolution is a movement from matter to spirit; and man is the bridge between them.

---

[220] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 287. [221] Ibid., p. 288.

[222] Ibid. [223] Ibid., pp. 288-289.

[224] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Singularities of the Human Species," AM, p. 264.

[225] Teilhard de Chardin, "Mon univers," FM, p. 306.

Human destiny. Teilhard viewed death as a metamorphosis.[227] The future of man is not a continuing progress but an ecstasy. Science does not tend to reveal a new God. Rather, it continues to reveal matter, which is the footstool of God. He concluded, "One does not draw near to the Absolute by travelling, but by ecstasy. Such is the final intellectual lesson of transformism and its more final moral and religious teaching."[228] His reflections on science, before he reached the level of theological faith, led him to accept the rational necessity for personal survival. However, he admitted an inability to "describe" the after-life:

> We hardly know in what proportions and under what guise our natural faculties will pass over into the final act of the divine vision. But it can hardly be doubted that, with God's help, it is here below that we give ourselves the eyes and the heart that a final transfiguration will transmute into organs of a capacity for adoration and beatification special to each one of us.[229]

---

[226] Teilhard de Chardin, "The End of the Species," FM, p. 302. See also PM, pp. 287-288; "L'Activation de l'énergie humaine," AE, p. 415.

[227] Teilhard de Chardin, "Esquisse d'un univers personnel," EH, pp. 108-109; "Barrière de la mort et co-réflexion," AE, pp. 419-429.

[228] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Basis and Foundations of the Idea of Evolution," VP, p. 132.

[229] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, pp. 28-29.

The function of death is not simply to cast men back into the great flux of reality, as the pantheist would have it. Rather, it is to allow one to pass into God and, therefore, to be completely surrendered to him.[230] It also furnishes the necessary entrance into man's inmost self.[231]

The greatest defficiency found in all positivist forms of belief in progress is their failure to provide an escape from death.[232] Following the death of a close friend, Teilhard reasoned:

> Either there is an escape from death--somewhere--for an individual's thought, for his self-consciousness, or else the world is a hideous mistake. And if it is, then there is no use in our going on. But, since the uselessness of going on is an idea intolerable to everyone, the alternative must be to believe. To awaken this belief shall be . . . my task. I swear it.[233]

He accepted Hell as a structural part of the universe.[234] It is the natural corrollary of Heaven which the believer learns to fear. He also recognized that man has the power to refuse God. However, he earnestly prayed that all men should be saved, that none should be damned.

> On Jesus, . . . closing my eyes to what my human weakness cannot as yet understand and therefore cannot bear--that is to say, to the reality of the damned--I desire at least to

---

[230] Teilhard de Chardin, HU, p. 150; MM, pp. 145, 164.

[231] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 61.

[232] Teilhard de Chardin, PM, p. 270.

[233] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 158, citing a letter by Teilhard, dated March 18, 1934.

[234] Teilhard de Chardin, DM, p. 129.

> make the ever present threat of damnation a part of my habitual and practical vision of the world, not in order to fear You, but in order to be more intensely Yours.[235]

He added:

> I pray, O Master, that the flames of hell may not touch me nor any of those whom I love, and even that they may never touch anyone (and I know, my God that you will forgive this bold prayer); but that, for each and every one of us, their sombre gleam may add, together with all the abysses that they reveal, to the blazing plenitude of the divine milieu.[236]

Teilhard was not a universalist; but he would probably have been, were it not for the compelling force of God's revelation in the scriptures and the Church.

VI. SUMMARY

The final stage of Teilhard's apologetic is the identification of the Omega of evolution with the Christ of faith. In order to make this equation, a leap of faith is necessary. He sought to make that faith reasonable by suggesting various logical, or rational, invitations to faith. Although he was fully aware that faith could never be produced by rational argument, he knew that a faith that is unreasonable is likely to collapse in the end.

Teilhard attempted to recast traditional theology, which has been stated primarily in terms of a static universe, in dynamic terms which are intelligible to one who holds a contemporary, scientific world-view. Herein lay the source of most of his problems with theology and the reason for his lack of communication with traditional, orthodox theologians.

---

[235] Ibid., p. 131. [236] Ibid.

Teilhard's theological thought is based on the concept of incarnation. For him, the cosmogenesis of evolution is, in Christian terms, a Christogenesis. The Incarnation of God in the human Jesus represents the beginning of a process which will be completed only at the consummation of the cosmos. The Incarnation is being completed through the building of the mystical Body of Christ, or in other terms, the spiritualization of the cosmos.

His Christology is basically orthodox. He accepted Christ as the second person of the Trinity, who became incarnate in the man, Jesus, and revealed to the world the nature of God as suffering love. In the light of his revelation, a cross appears at the heart of the world; and human life itself is seen as nothing short of a way of the cross. Through his resurrection, Christ won the victory over death, the ultimate enemy of man; and through an evangelical faith in him, mankind will be saved.

The greatest theological weakness in Teilhard's thought is the tendency to view sin in quantitative and impersonal terms. At this point his apologetic motive blurred the luster of his vision and produced a distortion of the Christian doctrine of evil, through an unbalanced emphasis.

For Teilhard, man reaches God not as the result of by-passing the world but by passing through it. Therefore, there is a healthy emphasis in his thought upon the positive values of the world and the validity and necessity of human achievement.

The doctrine of creation appears rather vague in Teilhard's thought. He defined creation as union. In keeping with this principle, he asserted that God created the world from a "creatable nothingness," or a "pure manifold," which begged for being. Through a creative act of union God initiated the cosmic process. It is difficult to understand how nothingness can beg for being. It is also difficult to understand how God could unite nothingness with nothingness and produce the embryo of a world. Yet it might be said in Teilhard's defense that he felt his view of creation to be in harmony with the biblical view of creatio ex nihilo. His lack of clarity at this point lies in the paradoxical nature of all ultimate questions.

Point Omega is that point at which the mystical Body of Christ is completed. World history, between the initiation of the Incarnation in Jesus and its completion in the mature Body of Christ, is merely a preparation for the Parousia. The Kingdom of God, which was given impetus by the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, will be consummated at Point Omega.[238] Teilhard leaned away from a cataclysmic view of the Parousia, although he did grant the possibility. The Parousia is another threshold, or critical point, in evolution. In the Parousia, a metamorphosis will take place and the material matrix of the world will be dissolved. A union of man, representative of the highest level of spirit in the evolutionary process, with God will take place. It will be a union charged with love; and such a union will differentiate, or personalize, the elements which comprise it

---

[238] In this respect it becomes apparent that Teilhard's views fit those of the school of inaugurated eschatology.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: AN EVALUATION OF TEILHARD'S THOUGHT

It is the purpose of this final chapter to evaluate Teilhard as a philosopher, scientist, theologian and apologist. The major criticisms of his work will be noted and further criticism offered.

I. TEILHARD AS A PHILOSOPHER

Philosophy of history. Through the centuries Christians have tended to disregard the value of history. In the early Church, after the ascension, there seems to have been hardly any interest in whether man was still moving towards an immanent destiny.[1] Teilhard took history seriously. He pictured it as a helix. Its movement, like that around the threads of a screw, surges upward from a broad base, contracting with each turn, toward a point of convergence. In this respect, his thought is somewhat similar to that of Vico; however, Vico felt the future could not be predicted. He recognized the possibility of a telos; however, he was not so certain of it as Teilhard.[2]

Teilhard contended that the meaning of history depends upon its center. In this respect his thought is parallel to that of Paul

---

[1] Piet Smulders, The Design of Teilhard de Chardin: An Essay in Theological Reflection, Trans. Arthur Gibson (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1967), p. 223.

[2] R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 67.

Tillich. Christ was the center for both Teilhard and Tillich. However, Tillich was rather vague in his understanding of the consummation of history, emphasizing, as an existentialist, the present moment and its relation to the eternal.[3] Also, Tillich's view that the Church becomes the bearer of history is somewhat similar to Teilhard's view of the Church as the axis of evolution.[4]

Teilhard's conception of history as a movement from a material to a spiritual pole finds a parallel in Hegel's thought. Hegel viewed history as the dialectic of the Spirit working out its theme. Teilhard saw a progressive liberation of spirit in the evolutionary process; however, he did not recognize a dialectical progression, in Hegel's sense of an interplay of contradictions, as the cause of the world's advance.[5] Teilhard saw history as a single movement, as did Hegel. In Hegel, the developmental process is teleological in nature.[6] There is a kind of teleological fatalism which is undergirded by a belief in divine providence. This may be seen in his discussion of the "cunning of reason," whereby men act as they will; but the end result is the accomplishment of God's plans.[7] There is a strong teleological emphasis in Teilhard's thought; however, his Omega, the personal, loving, and lovable focus of evolution, differs radically from Hegel's Absolute

---

[3] Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (3 vols.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963), III, pp. 147, 364-369.

[4] Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History, trans. N. A. Rasetzki and Elsa L. Talmey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 251 ff.

[5] Rabut, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[6] Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx (New York: The Humanities Press, 1958), p. 56.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

Spirit. Also, Teilhard left room for the possibility of a frustration of the process by a rejection of Omega by man, thus making man's freedom more significant than in Hegel's thought.

Teilhard saw Marxism as the greatest single threat to Christianity. He criticized Marx's purely immanent and materialistic emphasis. While he recognized many values in Marxism, he determined its basic weakness to be the absolute lack of any transcendent reference. Marxism is a dead end. He considered his own emphasis upon Omega as the focal point of evolution and the point of the world's consummation as the way out of Marxism's dilemma.

The philosophies of Spengler and Toynbee were admired by Teilhard. He appreciated their introduction of biological images into modern historiography. However, for them, these are only metaphors which do not build any ontological bridge between history and biology. Teilhard viewed human civilization in biological terms, seeing it as a prolongation, on the level of human consciousness, of the dynamism of evolution.

His philosophy of history is basically parallel to the biblical emphasis upon the significance of history and its movement towards a consummation. In the particulars of his thought, however, there are many similarities to that of secular philosophers, though he was more Christian in his approach than philosophical. His approach serves to complete Marxist philosophy by providing history with a goal. It also rejects the existentialist negation of history.

Pantheism. Teilhard at no point identified God with nature. Neither did he leave any room for the depersonalizing absorption of man into a great world soul. Yet, in spite of his protests to the contrary, some have accused him of being a pantheist.[8] He did advocate a kind of Christian pantheism, based on the biblical writings of Paul, in which God would become "all in all." However, he cautioned against the dangers of nature mysticism and emphatically denounced and rejected pantheism in the ordinary sense of the term.[9] Many of his interpreters have defended him at this point.[10] Teilhard saw God as incapable of being "mingled or confounded with the participating being whom He sustains, inspires and links with Himself."[11] Yet God is "at the birth, the growth and the ultimate end of all things."[12] Teilhard had definite inclinations towards pantheism in his youth; however, he overcame them through his doctrine of love as the only form of genuine union between persons. He often exclaimed, "Union differentiates!"[13]

---

[8] de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning, pp. 57, 181.

[9] Teilhard de Chardin, LT, p. 302; HU, p. 22; MM, pp. 93, 244, 256; HB, p. 30; DM, pp. 93, 96, 97; PM, pp. 309-310; AE, p. 61.

[10] de Lubac, op. cit., pp. 22, 25; Mooney, op. cit., p. 180; Murray, op. cit., p. 39; Leroy, op. cit., p. 40.

[11] Teilhard de Chardin, "La Vie cosmique," FM, p. 304; ET, p. 37.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Grand Option," FM, p. 53. Ibid., p. 52, he suggested that philosphical monism does not necessarily eliminate personal values. This was true for him in light of his view of the consummation of the universe in a union in which individuals are united with God and differentiated, or personalized, through love.

Existentialism. Teilhard considered the existentialists his adversaries. He concluded that human life is not a state.[14] He also repudiated pessimism as a mental attitude, for such could only lead to a frustration of the cosmic process. He emphatically rejected the emphasis of French existentialism upon the absurdity of the world. His work was both apologetic and polemic in relation to the existentialists. This becomes obvious as his emphasis upon a spirit of optimism, the value of human effort, and the necessity of a goal in history are observed.

Evaluation of Teilhard as a philosopher. Teilhard felt he would be considered a "philistine" by professional philosophers.[15] Though he had no intention of becoming a philosopher, it was inevitable that his work would overlap the field of philosophy. He never engaged in the work of a philosopher *per se*, but it became a by-product and secondary aspect of his work as a scientist and Christian apologist. He sought to build his view of the world from observations of the phenomena, recognizing that his conception of the world did ultimately involve at least a minimum of metaphysics. Murray concludes that the primary difference between Teilhard's thought and method and rational metaphysics lies in the fact that his *a priori* principles are eschatalogical and are imparted to man through God's revelation of himself in Christ to faith, whereas the philosopher's principles are regarded as innate in man's reason or the physical universe.[16] However, he does not adequately consider the fact that all philosophers have certain presuppositions, certain subjective starting points, from which they begin to formulate and develop their thought. There is no knowledge which is not personal in nature.

---

[14] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," *FM*, p. 227.

[15] Barthelemy-Madaule, *op. cit.*, p. 44, judges that Teilhard has at least written an introduction and prolegomena to a future philosophical view of the world.

Teilhard's work has been considered a philosophical apologia.[17] This is an evaluation with which he would not agree. His thought does, however, assume some of the characteristics of a philosophy, since it attempts to solve the problems of man's nature and his future.[18]

Philosophically, Teilhard was an immanent theist, since he maintained both the immanence and transcendence of God in relation to the world without identifying the essence of God with that of the world. He was an idealist, since his categories of cosmic explanation are adopted from his phenomenology; and he applied them by analogy to every problem which arose.[19] He was also a monist, asserting that the universe is a whole and a unity.[20] He saw the universe as a process of movement from plurality to unity. The plurality of the world is not illusory. It simply represents a stage of incomplete creation, since "to create is to unite."

---

[16] Murray, op. cit., p. 139. [17] Grenet, op. cit., p. 112.

[18] Elliot, op. cit., p. 5.

[19] McMullin, op. cit., p. 24. For a further discussion of Teilhard as an idealist, see Werner Stark, "Teilhard and the Problem of Human Autonomy," Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964 (New York: Fordham, University, n.d.), p. 111.

[20] See C. E. M. Joad, Guide to Philosophy (New York: Dover Publications, 1936), pp. 412 ff., for a valuable discussion of the nature and implications of philosophical monism.

In keeping with the philosophical position of monistic idealism, Teilhard accepted the coherence theory of truth, a theory which contends that a thing is true if it coheres with the general structure of beliefs concerning the universe as a whole. Such a view is generally held by idealists, and it is particularly essential to the monistic idealist.[21]

II. TEILHARD AS A SCIENTIST

Matter and spirit: the within of things. From both a philosophical and scientific point of view, Teilhard has been severely criticized for his assertion that all matter has an inner side which he called the "within of things."[22] He arrived at this position on the basis of his study of man. It appeared obvious to him that there is an inner side to man. Since he has emerged as an integral part of the overall evolutionary process, something akin to his inner side must exist, at least in a rudimentary form, in all things below him. Some inchoate form of spirit or mind must exist even in the most inanimate matter. Evolution is simply the process in which the growth of the inner side of things proceeds until it becomes predominant over the material aspect, in man, and is finally severed from its material matrix at Point Omega. Though many scientists view mind or spirit as merely an epiphenomenon of matter, a considerable number do support the general position which

---

[21] _Ibid_., p. 438.

[22] Rabut, _op_. _cit_., pp. 23, 35, 36, 39; Corte, _op_. _cit_., pp. 61, 87; McMullin, _op_. _cit_., pp. 22, 23; Garrigan, _op_. _cit_., pp. 24, 38; Stark, _op_. _cit_., pp. 79-80.

Teilhard represents.[23] Teilhard recognized his view involved an extrapolation and was not capable of empirical verification. However, he did not feel that his position was unscientific, since he had developed it by exercising a series of options which he considered scientifically legitimate.

Complexity/consciousness. Likewise, his formulation of the law of complexity/consciousness, which states that the degree of consciousness in matter is directly dependent upon, and proportional to, its complexity, found opposition.[24] However, many scientists agree with this contention in varying degrees.[25]

Evolution. Teilhard was convinced that evolution is an ascending movement. It is rising toward a goal which will not easily be achieved.[26] However, it will be achieved, because the world is not absurd.[27]

His contention that evolution has a direction has been challenged by some critics who suggest that enough is not known about evolution to make this decision with any degree of certainty.[28] Others have maintained that he did not properly evaluate the discontinuities in evolution,[29] that he rejected genetic theory,[30] that he ignored environmental factors in evolution,[31] that he did not understand natural selection,[32] and that he was too Lamarckian in his views.[33] Thorpe points out that Teilhard seemed more interested in the course evolution has taken than in how it has taken place. He goes on to write approvingly of Teilhard's law of complexity/consciousness, suggesting that as far as the facts go, they are on his side.[34]

---

[23] Chauchard, Man and Cosmos, pp. 56, 80-83; Raven, op. cit., p. 211; Barbour, op. cit., pp. 154-155.

[24] Rabut, op. cit., pp. 31, 47, 57, 237-239.

[25] James L. Foy, "Man and the Behavioral Sciences," The World of Teilhard, Robert T. Francoeur, editor (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 126; Chauchard, op. cit., p. 85; Thorpe, op. cit., p. 16.

[26] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 232.

[27] Rabut, op. cit., pp. 109, 124, calls this into question and accuses Teilhard of being too certain of the success of evolution.

Man. Teilhard used man as the key to understanding the universe. Contrary to conventional scientific method, he attempted to understand the lower through the higher. Man is the spearhead of evolution. In a sense he *is* evolution. Teilhard assumed that the future is homogeneous with the past and *vice versa*. The acceptance of this assumption led him to various conclusions which are not self-evident to many scientists. Because of this assumption, he was able to counter his critics at many points. His extrapolations concerning both the past and future are based on his observations of man and supported by this assumption.

---

[28] *Ibid*., pp. 50, 74, 121, 123. [29] Stark, *op*. *cit*., p. 84.

[30] Forsthoefel, *op*. *cit*., p. 106.

[31] de Terra, *op*. *cit*., pp. 30, 47.

[32] Forsthoefel, *op*. *cit*., p. 109.

[33] *Ibid*., pp. 106-107; Rabut, *op*. *cit*., pp. 59-60. See *PM*, p. 149, where Teilhard anticipated this criticism and defended himself.

[34] Thorpe, *op*. *cit*., pp. 15-17.

There is a recognition in Teilhard's thought that the future evolution of man exceeds the bounds of exact calculation.[35] However, he suggested certain tentative predictions about the future. He recognized the importance of human personality[36] and suggested that the universe is itself in process of becoming a person. The psychical organization which is taking place is moving toward a second, superior, collective threshold of reflection which will produce a super-organism, a brain of brains.[37]

Teilhard was not naively optimistic. The ultimate achievement of the second threshold of reflection is not absolutely certain. There is a possibility that the process will ultimately flounder and be frustrated.[38] Nevertheless he was convinced that success eventually would be realized.[39] He considered it the most probable outcome.[40]

---

[35] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," FM, p. 227.

[36] Huxley, preface to PM, pp. 19-20, recognizes this as a strength in Teilhard's thought.

[37] Rabut, *op. cit.*, pp. 106, 107, 109, 211, 216, criticizes this assertion as going too far. For further negative reaction, see Stark, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91. Stark contends that organic integration would diminish man rather than enhance his personality.

[38] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, pp. 117-121: He suggested five conditions that could frustrate the evolutionary process: (1) if the earth should become unfit for habitation before mankind matures, (2) if a scarcity of food or essential metals should develop, (3) if there should develop a quantitative or qualitative insufficiency of cerebral matter needed to maintain and increase the sum total of that which comprises the germ of the noosphere, (4) if man should lack the know-how to avoid the traps and blind alleys met on the road followed by evolution, or (5) if man should lose his will to do. See also PM, 307-308.

Omega. The advocation of an Omega at the term of hominization was reached only by extrapolation and remained a conjecture, a postulate.[41] Intellectually, he reached his conclusion on the basis of the hypothesis that the world forms a coherent and homogenous whole. He was quite aware that he had departed from the domain of strict natural science at this point.[42]

Evaluation of Teilhard as a scientist. Among Teilhard's fellow biologists, there are some who strongly oppose his views.[43] Conversely, there are others who, while recognizing his views cannot be proven, are not prepared to condemn them as unscientific.[44]

---

[39] Rabut, op. cit., pp. 99-100, concludes that Teilhard's concept of human organization as a continuation of morphological evolution is perhaps his greatest contribution.

[40] Teilhard de Chardin, MPN, p. 109: He clarified his use of the term "ultra-hominization." He contended that his meaning was on the analogy of "ultra-violet," an attempt to express the thought of a "human" extended beyond itself in a better organized and more mature form than is now known. He found the rejection of this concept among Christians startling.

[41] Cuenot, op. cit., p. 372, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Le Christique."

[42] Forsthoefel, op. cit., p. 98, makes this point as though Teilhard were naively unaware of it. G. G. Simpson, Review of The Phenomenon of Man, by Teilhard de Chardin, Scientific American, CCII (1960), 201-207, completely rejects the scientific value of Teilhard's conjecture.

[43] P. B. Medawar, Review of The Phenomenon of Man, by Teilhard de Chardin, Mind, LXX (1961), 99-106.

[44] Barbour, op. cit., p. 152, mentions Dobzhansky, Huxley, Raven, Piveteau, and Waddington among them.

In any attempt to relate religion and science there is the danger that concordism, the twisting of science to fit the needs of religion, will raise its head. Teilhard is not guilty of this error. He does not confuse these levels in his thought. Neither does he seek to prove religion from science.[45] However, he was convinced that there could not be a complete separation of the two. Divorce between science and religion must not be the last word.

Rabut objects that Teilhard carried the biological conception of matter and the cosmos too far.[46] He also complains that he overstepped the limits of philosophy and science.[47] Others defend his assertions as basically scientific in character.[48]

Teilhard recognized the existence of a scientific orthodoxy. He also recognized the subjective nature of scientific investigation and observation.[49] Everyone sees on the basis of his own presuppositions, his own viewpoint, Consequently, he expressed his views in tentative terms, recognizing his inability to speak authoritatively on certain matters.[50] He recognized the limits of the scientific method; consequently, his extrapolations were presented as hypotheses. He was not deluded into thinking they could be immediately and empirically verified.

---

[45] See Teilhard's letter, dated April 14, 1953, cited in Cuenot, _op. cit._, pp. 395-396, for his own statement about concordism.

[46] Rabut, _op. cit._, p. 59. [47] _Ibid._, pp. 130-131.

[48] O'Connell, _op. cit._, p. 16; Garrigan, _op. cit._, p. 37, suggests that his thought is essentially in the right direction.

[49] Teilhard de Chardin, _PM_, p. 32. [50] _Ibid._, p. 35.

III. TEILHARD AS A THEOLOGIAN

Most of the facets of Teilhard's theological thought have been carefully scrutinized. Many complaints have been heard and many problems have been encountered.

Faith. Teilhard's understanding of faith has been called into question by some interpreters. His apologetic assertion of a faith in the world has been misunderstood and distorted. In keeping with his apologetic purpose, Teilhard sought to find some common ground of agreement with the unbeliever, with the hope that he could lead him slowly to a commitment involving a theological and evangelical faith in God. His "faith in the world" involved more than the unbeliever would initially suspect, for he broadened this concept step by step in an attempt to lead him to the threshold of supernatural faith. He recognized that he could only lead the unbeliever to the threshold and no further. The initial faith in the world is only psychological, whereas the faith to which he would lead the unbeliever is a religious faith. He was emphatic in asserting that a worldly faith alone is not enough.[51] In his method, he is similar to many other apologists.

Christology. Christ is viewed by Teilhard as both the Alpha and Omega of the universe.[52] His belief in a cosmic Christ has been attacked on the basis that it is tainted with pantheism and contradicts the personal nature of God.[53] Such criticism is ill-founded.

---

[51] Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," FM, p. 265; DM, p. 115.

[52] Teilhard de Chardin, "Science et Christ ou Analyse et Synthèse," SC, p. 60.

Christology is the basis of Teilhard's incarnational theology. He did not draw all the implications of his Christology because of the limitations of his apologetic purpose. His Christology is basically orthodox, though incomplete. His greatest contribution in this area was to lay some adequate guidelines for a Christology of the future.

God. For Teilhard, God is the pre-existent, transcendent Being with whom man is destined to unite at Point Omega. He is not the fruit, or end result, of evolution. He is immanent in the process, but he is also transcendent. Mooney claims that the sense of transcendence is sometimes lost in Teilhard's thought.[54] This is true, in spite of his repeated statements of belief in transcendence. One could never justly suggest that Teilhard did not genuinely believe in God's transcendence; however, it is possible to maintain that his apologetic emphasis upon immanence overshadows his equally strong belief in transcendence. This was the price he had to pay, for an apologetics of immanence is the only effective approach to the modern, scientific, positivistic world.

Evil. The point at which Teilhard has been most severely criticized by theologians is in his view of evil. Even his most sympathetic critics suggest a lack here. Teilhard defended himself by contending that he wanted to major on the positive values of evolution and that this did not imply a rejection of the power of evil. The end result of his apologetic emphasis upon the positive, nevertheless, is the diminishment of the equally real negative aspect of the world. His encouragement of men towards optimism and the positive values of life is desperately needed in our day. However, through an unbalanced emphasis, he has distorted the Christian view of evil, which recognizes the existence of absurd and perverse elements in the world. His failure here is not so much the result of theological error as misplaced emphasis.

---

[53] See de Lubac, op. cit., pp. 36, 46, and 53, for a discussion of critics like Philippe de la Trinité and Dom G. Frenaud.

[54] Mooney, op. cit., p. 207.

Eschatology. Teilhard saw the world as moving toward an ecstatic point of metamorphosis in which spirit will be severed from its material matrix. He saw the supernatural as requiring the formation and complete maturation of the ultra-human, as a necessary prerequisite to this point of ecstasy.[55] He was confident of the eventual formation of the ultra-human, or hyper-personal, and of its ultimate consummation in God. However, he did recognize the possibility of rebellion on the part of man, resulting in his own dehumanization and the destruction of creation. He was not blindly utopian. In various ways he attacked the "myths of a Golden Age" in the future. Among these "myths" he included Marxism, which he saw as a distortion of the values of an expection of an ultra-human, reducing the future to a threadbare millenium.[56]

---

[55] Teilhard de Chardin, "Réflexions sur la probabilité scientifique," AE, pp. 289-290.

[56] Teilhard de Chardin, "The End of the Species," FM, p. 303; Cuenot, op. cit., p. 354, citing a letter by Teilhard dated November 26, 1952.

Teilhard's view of the future is not of an earthly paradise without problems and filled with creature comforts. Rather, it pictures the universe in process of gradual personalization and spiritualization, maturing in the hyper-personal and consummated at a critical point at which mankind is united with God and differentiated by love. The Parousia will take place as the result of the attractive force of God-Omega; but the earthly pre-condition for this event is the success of hominization.

Evaluation of Teilhard as a theologian. Teilhard's theology is a Christology. Though he did not attempt to write a theology, it was his theological purpose to rethink and restate Christology in terms of genesis. What theology he did write was simply an expression of his own spiritual experience. He made no attempt to write a systematic theology. His experience was that of a faith seeking understanding; consequently, he often expressed his theology in tentative terms. Only the rare enthusiast would classify him as a great theologian. Some would suggest a place for him on the other end of the scale. However the truth lies somewhere between the extremes, with perhaps a majority of his interpreters underestimating his competence in this field. In any case, he was not a technical and professional theologian.

Teilhard's primary theological significance lies in his attempt as a scientist to grapple with the religious and theological problem of modifying the perspective of contemporary Christology in the hope of stimulating more professional theologians into an awareness of this need. Any serious study of his work makes a re-examination of the theological task itself necessary.[57] He believed the professional theologians could face the problem better than he but that he could see it more clearly than they.[58]

Teilhard's theological thought is more in need of completion than drastic change. He succeeded in setting out some guidelines which may serve to give direction to the theology of the future in its continuing effort to be relevant to its contemporary world.

IV. TEILHARD AS AN APOLOGIST

Consideration has been given to Teilhard as a philosopher, scientist and theologian. In a sense, his thought and work encompassed all three of these fields, though his major area of competence was in a specialized field of biology.

The primary thrust of his life's work, however, was as a Christian apologist. He was a man attempting to express what lay at the heart of his generation.[59] In the process, he was not ashamed of being branded an apologist, as though some shame were attached to such activity. Neither was he hesitant in insisting upon every Christian's duty as an apologist for his faith.[60] He spoke to believer and unbeliever alike, though his primary concern was for the agnostic and atheistic naturalists of the scientific community. An attempt will now be made to evaluate his weaknesses and strengths as an apologist.

---

[57] Georges Crespy, _La Pensée theologique de Teilhard de Chardin_ (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1961), p. 218.

[58] Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Christ evoluteur," _Le Christ évoluteur_ (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin Cahier V. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965), p. 18.

[59] Cuenot, _op. cit._, p. 367, citing a letter by Teilhard.

[60] Teilhard de Chardin, _DM_, p. 39.

Weaknesses. Teilhard's weaknesses as an apologist are related in some measure to the problem of communication.

First, there is the danger that his terminology will be misunderstood. He spoke of "Christian humanism," "faith in the world," "faith in man," and "neo-Christianity," to give a few examples of his terminology. It is obvious from even a superficial reading of his interpreters that he failed to communicate his meaning to many of them. He coined language, which he hoped would serve as an apologetic bridge, sometimes suggests non-Christian or even anti-Christian doctrines, when taken literally and in their usual sense. Most of his severe critics refuse to use his terms as he defined them; consequently, they see him, if not as a heretic, as a distorter of Christian truth. Teilhard was a poet living in an age of prose. A literal reading of his work leads to a complete misunderstanding of his thought.

Second, Teilhard wrote with a boldness, which was sometimes misleading. Intuition formed the basis of much of his creative thought; and as he himself recognized, intuition is never perfect. There is no real doubt about the correctness of his general orientation and direction. He was not as revolutionary as he may at first appear; but there was a certain imbalance and incompleteness about his thought which has been misleading to some. There is also a certain clumsiness in part of his work, characteristic of that which has been intuited, or "seen," as opposed to that which has been carefully reasoned. He partially recognized this and hoped others would develop a more complete and better developed position in the future, based on his basic insight.

Teilhard was a pioneer; and pioneers are quite often imprecise and, consequently, misunderstood.

Third, there is a general usage in his arguments of sweeping, world-embracing concepts. It was his intention to broaden the horizons of Christianity and reveal the greatness of Christ. However, this approach, on a macrocosmic scale, has tended to make his thought impersonal, contrary to his deepest wishes and intentions.

Fourth, in his attempt to emphasize the value of human effort and progress within God's plan for the world, there is a danger that everything human be accepted without adequate evaluation in the light of the revelation already available.

Fifth, his use of analogies of biological evolution involves the danger of making the evolutionary viewpoint a panacea for all ills and viewing too lightly the age-old human and religious problems which have plagued mankind. The prime example of this fault in Teilhard is found in his inadequate development of the doctrine of sin.

Sixth, Teilhard placed such strong emphasis upon the immanence of God that many have termed him a pantheist. Although the concept of transcendence is always present in his thought, it is occasionally overshadowed by his apologetic emphasis upon immanence. This approach is at the same time a strength, because of the need in this generation for an awareness of God's presence in the world.

Strengths. The strengths of Teilhard's apologetic approach outweigh its inherent weaknesses.

First, Teilhard accepted and advocated a teleological explanation of the universe. This approach can be particularly effective in areas where science, or the positivistic outlook in general, is weak. It is capable of giving a more satisfactory account of such things as art, religion and morality. Idealists in general tend to accept a teleological causation, whereas materialists tend to adopt a mechanical causation.

Second, he attempted to give value to human effort and achievement. He viewed these as part of the overall process of fulfilling the potentialities of a world which is moving toward a consummation. Human effort, properly understood, is a co-operation with God, since it assists this process toward its goal. Mankind will reach its potentiality; and the goal will be achieved, because the world is not absurd. Here, his optimism shines through the clouds of human despair and pessimism. He maintained that it is only as man's secular work and aspirations are encompassed by his religion that they can be properly and adequately guided and inspired by the Christ. This approach has great apologetic value in any confrontation with pessimism in any of its forms. Potentially, it is capable of infusing hope into the modern world.

Third, he asserted that the world is an evolution involving a movement from a material to a spiritual pole. His contention that the movement of spirit is irreversible led him to a view that man, as the highest achievement of evolution and possessor of the greatest abundance of spirit, is an immortal being. The concept of human immortality leads to a way out of the materialistic dead end like that of the Marxist. Teilhard was rightly convinced that a confidence in the spiritualization of earthly values and march towards the future would disarm the most dangerous part of modern unbelief.

Fourth, Teilhard's model was that of the Person. It became for him an important apologetic tool. In an impersonal world, one of the greatest needs of man is to retain or regain his personhood. Teilhard's approach offers this possibility to the unbeliever by inviting an acceptance of the Church, whose God is the source of personalizing and differentiating love. Christianity is pictured as fulfilling the conditions one might expect necessary of a religion of the future, since the world is in process of becoming a Person.

Fifth, Teilhard restated Christianity in evolutionary terms. He asserted the truth of God in categories which are understandable to the scientific mind he was trying to reach.

Sixth, his this-worldly emphasis, with its accompanying optimism, matches and challenges the Communist appeal to mankind.[61] He may be said to have explained Christianity in Marxist terms. He has been called the first "Marxist Christian."[62] The escape he offered from the Marxist's materialistic dead end through union with God-Omega should offer the unbeliever an additional enticement. His emphasis upon individual salvation within the collective whole of man incorporates the best insights of both Christianity and Marxism and should make his approach appealing to the Marxist. Teilhard is, above all others, a

---

[61] Roger Garaudy, "Le Père Teilhard, le Councile et les Marxists," Europe, XLIII (Mars-Avril, 1965), 186. Garaudy, a leading spokesman of French Communism, suggests a point of mutual understanding and agreement with Teilhard's optimism.

[62] Zaehner, op. cit., p. 33.

Christian apologist to the Marxists. His most significant work is the infusion of hope into a generation filled with despair, loss of purpose, and boredom.

For Teilhard, everything is sacred. Nothing is profane. He saw the spread of the so-called secular culture, with all its attendant embellishments, as a phase in man's coming of age and a liberation into a broadening freedom. His thought parallels Bonhoeffer in this regard. However, his faithfulness to the Church, even obedience within the structure of its institutional expression, is in sharp contrast to Bonhoeffer's radical approach. Teilhard did not formulate new theological ideas. Rather, he created a unique synthesis which was at least partially successful in joining the worlds of religion and science in a single panoramic view of the cosmos. It is a breathtaking view, involving a cosmogenesis which is also a Christogenesis--a world in evolution moving towards the Parousia of biblical revelation. His synthesis has exerted a powerful attraction since the posthumous publication of his work. However, the greatest and most effective apology for his faith was his own saintly life, which was lived in harmony with his vision. He prayed:

> Lord of my childhood and Lord of my end--God complete in himself, and yet, for us, continually being born . . . , sweep away at last all the clouds that still shroud you--the clouds of hostile prejudice and the clouds of false belief. And through what is at once diaphany and conflagration may your Universal Presence leap forth. O Christ, ever more great.[63]

His entire life was devoted to the communication of that vision; and one month before his death he wondered:

---

[63] Jeanne Mortiér and Marie-Louise Aboux (ed.), Teilhard de Chardin Album (London: Collins, 1966), p. 205, citing Teilhard's unpublished essay, "Le Cour de la Matière," 1950.

Energy becoming Presence . . .

One would think that a single ray of this kind of light, falling anywhere on the Noosphere, as a spark, would cause an explosion strong enough to inflame and transform the face of Earth almost instantaneously. How then can it be that I, looking around me, still intoxicated by what has been shown to me, should find myself alone, as it were, the only one of my species? The only one to have seen? . . . and so unable, when asked, to cite a single author, a single text, which might clearly describe the marvellous 'translucence' that has so transfigured everything I see?[64]

---

[64] Ibid., p. 213, citing "Le Christique," March, 1955.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

A. Books, Collected Works and Essays

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *Écrits du temps de la guerre*. Paris: Grasset, 1965.

_______. "Human Energy," *Building the Earth*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin I. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958. Pp. 64-72.

_______. *Hymn of the Universe*. Translated by Simon Bartholomew. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

_______. "La Grand Monade," *Réflexions sur le bonheur*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin II. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1960. Pp. 39-48.

_______. "La Parole attendue," *La Parole attendue*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin IV. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963. Pp. 22-29.

_______. "La Pensée du Père Teilhard de Chardin par lui-meme," *Les Études philosophiques*, X (Octobre-Decembre, 1955), 580-581.

_______. *L'Activation de l'énergie*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963.

_______. "Le Christ évoluteur," *Le Christ évoluteur*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin V. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965. Pp. 17-27.

_______. *L'Énergie humaine*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1962.

_______. *Letters from a Traveller*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962.

_______. *Letters from Egypt*. Translated by Mary Ilford. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965.

_______. *Man's Place in Nature*. Translated by René Hague. London: Collins, 1966.

_______. "Note pour servir á l'evangèlisation des temps nouveaux," *La Parole attendue*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin IV. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963. Pp. 11-21.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. "On the Possible Basis of a Common Credo," *Building the Earth*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin I. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958. Pp. 76-78.

_______. "Réflexions sur le bonheur," *Réflexions sur le bonheur*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin II. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1960. Pp. 53-70.

_______. *The Appearance of Man*. Translated by J. M. Cohen. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

_______. *The Divine Milieu*. Translated by Bernard Wall. New York: Harper and Row, 1960.

_______. *The Future of Man*. Translated by Norman Denny. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

_______. *The Making of a Mind: Letters from a Soldier-Priest 1914-1919*. Translated by René Hague. London: Collins, 1965.

_______. *The Phenomenon of Man*. Translated by Bernard Wall. New York: Harper and Row, 1959.

_______. The Psychological Conditions of Human Unification," translated by Joseph L. Caufield, *Cross Currents*, III (Fall, 1952), 1-5.

_______. "The Spirit of Earth," *Building the Earth*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin I. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958. Pp. 57-63.

_______. "Thoughts on Progress," *Building the Earth*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin I. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958. Pp. 73-75.

_______. *The Vision of the Past*. Translated by J. M. Cohen. London: Collins, 1966.

_______. *Science et Christ*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965.

_______. "We Must Save Mankind," *Building the Earth*. Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin I. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958. Pp. 49-56.

B. Unpublished Material

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. "How I Believe." Privately printed for selected friends. Peiping, China: By the Author, 1936.

II. Critical Writings on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

A. Books

Barbour, George B. *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965.

Barthélemy-Madaule, Madeleine. *Bergson et Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963.

Benz, Ernst. *Evolution and Christian Hope: Man's Concept of the Future from the Early Fathers to Teilhard de Chardin*. Translated by Heinz G. Frank. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966.

Braybrooke, Neville (ed.). *Teilhard de Chardin: Pilgrim of the Future*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1964.

Chauchard, Paul. *Man and Cosmos: Scientific Phenomenology in Teilhard de Chardin*. Translated by George Courtright. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965.

______. *Teilhard de Chardin on Love and Suffering*. Translated by Marie Chene. Deus Books. Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966.

Corte, Nicolas. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: His Life and Spirit*. Translated by Martin Jarrett-Kerr. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960.

Crespy, Georges. *La Pensée theologique de Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris: Éditions Universitaries, 1961.

Cuenot, Claude. *Teilhard de Chardin*. Translated by Vincent Colimore. London: Burns and Oates, 1965.

de Lubac, Henri. *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning*. Translated by René Hague. New York: Hawthorn, 1965.

______. *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*. Translated by René Hague. London: Collins, 1967.

de Terra, Helmut. *Memories of Teilhard de Chardin*. Translated by J. Maxwell Brownjohn. London: Collins, 1964.

Francoeur, Robert T. (ed.). *The World of Teilhard*. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961.

Grenet, Paul. *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Theories*. Translated by R. A. Rudorff. Profiles in Science. London: Souvenir Press, 1965.

Kopp, Joseph V. *Teilhard de Chardin: A New Synthesis of Evolution*. Deus Books. Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1964.

Lignuel, André. *Teilhard et le personnalisme*. Carnets Teilhard, No. 17. Paris: Éditions Universitaries, 1964.

Mooney, Christopher F. *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ*. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

Mortier, Jeanne, and Marie-Louise Aboux (eds.). *Teilhard de Chardin Album*. London: Collins, 1966.

Murray, Michael H. *The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin: An Introduction*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1966.

Rabut, Oliver. *Dialogue with Teilhard de Chardin*. Stagbooks. London: Sheed and Ward, 1961.

Raven, Charles. *Teilhard de Chardin: Scientist and Seer*. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Smulders, Piet. *La Vision de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*. Translated by Augustin Kerkvoorde and Christian d'Armagnac. Second Edition. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965. (English translation. *The Design of Teilhard de Chardin: An Essay in Theological Reflection*. Translated by Arthur Gibson. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1967.)

Towers, Bernard. *Teilhard de Chardin*. Makers of Contemporary Theology. London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1966.

Tresmontant, Claude. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: His Thought*. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1959.

Zaehner, R. C. *Matter and Spirit: Their Convergence in Eastern Religions, Marx, and Teilhard de Chardin*. Edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. Religious Perspectives, Vol. VIII. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

B. Articles and Periodicals

Barthélemy-Madaule, Madeleine. "Teilhard de Chardin, Neo-Marxism, Existentialism: A Confrontation," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, I (December, 1961), 648-667.

Bilaniuk, Petro. "The Christology of Teilhard de Chardin," *Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964*. New York: Fordham University, n.d. Pp. 109-133.

Brunner, August. "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: A Critique," *Theology Digest*, VIII (1960), 143-147.

Crespy, Georges. "Teilhard de Chardin and Theology," *The Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, LV (December, 1964), 10-14.

_______. "Teilhard de Chardin on Evil and the Cross," *Philosophy Today*, VIII (Summer, 1964), 84-100.

d'Armagnac, Christian. "La Pensée du Père Teilhard de Chardin comme apologétique moderne," *Nouvelle revue theologique*, LXXXIV (June, 1962), 598-621.

Elliot, F. G. "The World Vision of Teilhard de Chardin," *The Teilhard Review*, I (Summer, 1966), 5-14.

Fleming, T. V. "Two Unpublished Letters of Teilhard," *The Heythrop Journal*, VI (January, 1965), 36-45.

Forstoefel, Paulinus F. "Beneath the Microscope," *The World of Teilhard*. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 98-114.

Foy, James L. "Man and the Behavioral Sciences," *The World of Teilhard*. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 115-130.

Francoeur, Robert T. "Introduction: A New World Vision," *The World of Teilhard*. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 7-23.

Fullman, Christopher E., and Henry J. -J. d'Aoust. "The Energetics of Love," *The World of Teilhard*. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 146-155.

Garrigan, Owen W. "Chemical Evolution," *Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964*. New York: Fordham University, n.d. Pp. 23-40.

Garaudy, Roger. "Le Père Teilhard, le Councile et les Marxistes," *Europe*, XLIII (Mars-Avril, 1965), 185-208.

Guggenberger, Alois. "Teilhard de Chardin: Beginning or End?," *Philosophy Today*, VII (Summer, 1964), 101-109.

Huxley, Julian. Introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man*, by Teilhard de Chardin. New York: Harper and Row, 1959. Pp. 11-28.

Johann, Robert O. "Teilhard's Personalized Universe," *Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964*. New York: Fordham University, n.d. Pp. 93-108.

Knodel, Arthur J. "A 'Gentile's' View," *The World of Teilhard*. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 77-91.

Leroy, Pierre. "The Man," in Letters from a Traveller, by Teilhard de Chardin. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962. Pp. 15-48.

Malevez, Leopold. "The Method of Teilhard and Phenomenology," Theology Digest, VIII (Autumn, 1960), 137-142.

McMullin, Ernan. "Teilhard as a Philosopher," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LV (December, 1964), 15-28.

Medawar, P. B. Review of The Phenomenon of Man, by Teilhard de Chardin, Mind, LXX (1961), 99-106.

Mooney, Christopher F. "Blondel and Teilhard de Chardin: An Exchange of Letters," Thought, XXXVII (Winter, 1962), 543-562.

Movius, H. L., Jr. "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S. J., 1881-1955," American Anthropologist, LVIII (1956), 147-150.

O'Connell, Robert J. "Teilhard's Synthesis: Some Criteria for Criticism," Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964. New York: Fordham University, n.d. Pp. 1-22.

Piveteau, Jean. Preface to Man's Place in Nature, by Teilhard de Chardin. London: Collins, 1966. Pp. 7-9.

Reilly, James P., Jr. "A Student of the 'Phenomena,'" The World of Teilhard. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 49-63.

Roth, Robert J. "The Importance of Matter," America, CIX (December 21, 1963), 792-794.

Simpson, G. G. Review of The Phenomenon of Man, by Teilhard de Chardin, Scientific American, CCII (1960), 201-207.

Snape, H. C. "Two Jesuits and Their Church: Teilhard and Tyrrell," Modern Churchman, V (July, 1962), 255-260.

Stark, Werner. "Teilhard and the Problem of Human Autonomy," Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964. New York: Fordham University, n.d. Pp. 77-92.

Stern, Karl. "'Universum Dei,'" The World of Teilhard. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 40-48.

Swan, Lucille. "Memories and Letters," Teilhard de Chardin: Pilgrim of the Future. Edited by Neville Braybrooke. New York: The Seabury Press, 1964. Pp. 40-49.

Vollert, Cyril. "Toward Omega: the Vision of Man," *Theology Digest*, VIII (1960), 133-136.

Weigel, Gustave. "The Phenomenon of Teilhard de Chardin," *The World of Teilhard*. Edited by Robert T. Francoeur. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961. Pp. 156-166.

C. Unpublished Material

Crespy, Georges. "Evolution and Its Problems." Lecture delivered at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1965. (Mimeographed.)

______. "Teilhard's Concerns and Questions." Lecture delivered at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1965. (Mimeographed.)

III. General Works

A. Books

Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. Translated by Arthur Mitchell. New York: Henry Holt, 1911.

______. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. Translated by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton. New York: Henry Holt, 1935.

Bevan, Edwyn. *Symbolism and Belief*. The Fontana Library. London: Collins, 1962.

Boaz, George. *The Limits of Reason*. Religious Perspectives, Vol. III. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961.

Casserley, J. V. *Apologetics and Evangelism*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962.

______. *The Christian in Philosophy*. London: Faber and Faber, 1951.

Collingwood, R. G. *The Idea of History*. A Galaxy Book. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Farrar, Austin. *The Glass of Vision*. London: Dacre Press, 1948.

Harris, Errol E. *Nature, Mind and Modern Science*. New York: Macmillan, 1954.

Hook, Sidney. From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx. New York: The Humanities Press, 1958.

Joad, C. E. M. Guide to Philosophy. New York: Dover Publications, 1936.

Kroner, Richard. Speculation and Revelation in the Age of Christian Philosophy. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.

Leibniz, Wilhelm Gottfried. The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings. Translated with introduction and notes by Robert Latta. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

Löwith, Karl. Meaning in History. Phoenix Books. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949.

MacIntyre, Alisdair, and Anthony Flew (eds.). New Essays in Philosophical Theology. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Magill, Frank N. (ed.). Masterpieces of World Philosophy in Summary Form. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.

O'Flaherty, James C. Unity and Language: A Study in the Philosophy of Johann Georg Hamann. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1952.

Oman, John. The Natural and the Supernatural. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931.

Pittenger, W. Norman. Rethinking the Christian Message. Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1956.

Polanyi, Michael. Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy. First Harper Torchbook edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

_______. Science, Faith and Society. Phoenix Books. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Pollard, William G. Chance and Providence: God's Action in a World Governed by Scientific Law. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

Ramsey, I. T. Religion and Science: Conflict and Synthesis. London: S. P. C. K., 1964.

Richardson, Alan. Christian Apologetics. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947.

Rust, Eric C. *Towards a Theological Understanding of History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Smuts, J. C. *Holism and Evolution*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926.

Thorpe, W. H. *Biology and the Nature of Man*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Temple, William. *Nature, Man and God*. London: The Macmillan Company, 1956.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. III. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963.

______. *The Interpretation of History*. Translated by N. A. Rasetzki and Elsa L. Talmey. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

Ward, James. *Naturalism and Agnosticism*. Vol. I. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1899.

______. *The Realm of Ends or Pluralism and Theism*. Third edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920.

Whitehead, A. N. *Religion in the Making*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.

______. *Science and the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932.

B. Articles and Periodicals

Crombie, Ian. "Theology and Falsification," *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*. Edited by Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Hare, R. M. "Theology and Falsification," *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*. Edited by Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Polanyi, Michael. "An Epic Theory of Evolution," *Saturday Review*, XLIII (January 30, 1960), 21.

Rust, Eric C. "Christian Faith and Scientific Knowledge," *Philosophy Today*, IX (Winter, 1965), 278-293.

______. "The Apologetic Task in the Modern Scene," *Review and Expositor*, LVI (April, 1959), 178-200.

Rust, Eric C. "The Holy Spirit, Nature, and Man," Review and Expositor, LXIII (Spring, 1966), 157-176.

Williams, Bernard. "Tertullian's Paradox," New Essays in Philosophical Theology. Edited by Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC OF PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

by

Charles Raymond Gaba

The works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin have met with a phenomenal reception since their publication, following his death on Easter Sunday, 1955. They are primarily concerned with the place of the Christian Gospel in the world of modern science, in which it is basically rejected or ignored. Teilhard defended the truth and value of Christianity by presenting it in the light of modern science as a reasonable alternative in naturalism, humanism, agnosticism and atheism. He believed his contemporaries were without purpose and plagued with a deep sense of boredom. Consequently, as a remedy to this situation, he sought to present Christianity as a ray of hope for modern man and the only religion capable of meeting the needs of the future. Teilhard was a paleontologist by profession, his only training as philosopher and theologian being that received in preparation as a Jesuit.

Because his apologetic interest grew out of his life, the first chapter is concerned with the major events and influences of his life. The second chapter is concerned with the nature and purpose of Christian apologetics. It also deals with Teilhard's view of the modern situation which faces the Christian Gospel and his method of dealing with it. The next three chapters are a step by step analysis of the credo which he formulated and included in "How I Believe," an

unpublished essay written in 1936. There have been many criticisms of Teilhard's work by scientists, philosophers and theologians. Consequently, the last chapter deals with the major criticisms in these areas. Also, his weaknesses and strengths as an apologist are discussed.

One of the conclusions of this study is that Teilhard is basically orthodox in his theology. Many of his problems are those which are faced by any man who is trying to translate Christianity into a different and more current terminology. In general, he represented Christianity faithfully to the unbeliever. The primary defects of his presentation, and there are some, result from incompleteness more than basic error.

Teilhard was an expert in neither philosophy nor theology. Nor were the particulars of his thought new or unique. His uniqueness lay in the synthesis which he formulated. He did not "prove" the validity of the Christian Gospel, but he did succeed in offering some reasonable invitations to the unbeliever to accept it.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHEET

Name: Charles Raymond Gaba

Born: August 7, 1933

Education:
West Jackson Elementary School, Jackson, Tennessee
Idlewild Elementary School, Memphis, Tennessee
Jackson Junior High School, Jackson, Tennessee
Jackson High School, Jackson, Tennessee
Union University, Jackson, Tennessee (1950-1954), Bachelor of Arts Degree, June, 1954
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky (1954-1957), Bachelor od Divinity Degree, June, 1957
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky (1959-1960), Master of Theology Degree, June, 1960

Experience:
Assistant to the Pastor of First Baptist Church, Trenton, Tennessee (1952-1953)
Pastor of Laneview Baptist Church, Kenton, Tennessee (1953-1954)
Pastor of Como Baptist Church, Como, Mississippi (1957-1959)
Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Frankfort, Kentucky (1959-1961)
Pastor of Bagdad Baptist Church, Bagdad, Kentucky (1961-1965)
Teaching Fellow in the Department of Theology, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1962-1965)
Associate Pastor of Deer Park Baptist Church Louisville, Kentucky (1965-)

Family:
Parents: Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Gaba
Wife: Married Betty Jo Wicker in 1958 in New Albany, Mississippi
Children: William Raymond-1960; Charles Edward-1960; Rachel Elizabeth-1963; Sarah Jo-1967